DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 326 587 UD 027 410

AUTHOR Willie, Charles V.; Alves, Michael J.
TITLE Proposed Student Assignment Plan. Boston Public Schools. December, 1988.
INSTITUTION Harvard Univ., Cambridge, Mass. Graduate School of Education.
SPONS AGENCY Boston Public Schools, Mass.
PUB DATE Dec 88
NOTE 138p.; Some appended material contains small, filled-in type.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Access to Education; Accountability; Desegregation Plans; *Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; *Equal Education; *Racial Balance; *School Choice; *School Desegregation; School District Autonomy; Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS *Boston Public Schools MA

ABSTRACT

The proposed Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan for the Boston Public Schools guarantees equitable school desegregation by allowing parents and students to make multiple school selections by their own rank-order of preference that will be used to allocate school space in a racially proportional manner. The plan enhances the quality of education by obligating every school to offer an attractive learning environment in a competitive atmosphere. The city will be divided into three assignment zones, each operating as if it were an autonomous school system with its own superintendent and an advisory council of parents, educators, and community leaders. Each school principal will be accountable for improving educational quality while maintaining racial diversity. Each school's enrollment must reflect the racial ratio of the entire school system. Other features include the following: (1) maximum student travel time is between 30 and 40 minutes; (2) zones link contiguous residential areas that meet the criteria of equity and diversity; (3) zones encompass an equivalent range of educational programs and services and have sufficient instructional space to accommodate all residential students; and (4) all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups must have fair access to all schools within a zone. Seven newspaper articles are included. A description of the student assignment process and 15 tables of statistical data (zone student profiles) are appended. (FMW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED326587

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Charles V Willie

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Proposed Student Assignment Plan Boston Public Schools

December, 1988

City of Boston

UD 027 410

A PROPOSED CONTROLLED CHOICE ASSIGNMENT PLAN FOR THE BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Report by the Consultants

A Report by the Consultants

Charles Willie
Graduate School of Education
Harvard University

Michael Alves
Educational Planner
and Former Director for Desegregation Assistance
Massachusetts Department of Education

December, 1988

CITY OF BOSTON • MASSACHUSETTS

RAYMOND L. FLYNN

December 13, 1988

Dear School Committee Member:

I am pleased that tonight marks the formal presentation of a proposed new student assignment plan as prepared by Dr. Charles Willie and Mr. Michael Alves, two nationally recognized consultants hired by the City in collaboration with the School Committee.

I urge you to move swiftly in your deliberations. Over the past two weeks, we have had an unprecedented opportunity to review important student assignment issues together at three well attended public meetings. The momentum for meaningful change is building. We must take advantage of this unique window of opportunity to win the trust and confidence of parents and the general public. By successfully legislating and implementing a new student assignment plan, you will take the all important first step. There will be a whole series of important issues before the School Committee when you reconvene in January of 1989. It is crucial that you bring closure to this process before these other issues begin to dominate your deliberations. If you succeed, we all win together, especially the parents and children of our city.

The consultant report is the product of an unprecedented collaborative process in which hundreds of parents, advocates and educators have had significant and ongoing input into the development of the new plan. Under the leadership of Thomas O'Reilly and Juanita Wade, the School Committee has played a key role in this collaborative effort. Dr. Laval Wilson has met frequently with the consultants and assigned professional staff, specifically Dr. Clarence Hoover and Mr. John Halloran, to work with Dr. Willie and Mr. Alves on a regular basis. As well informed professionals, they have made an indispensable contribution to the development of the proposed plan.

I cannot overstate the importance of this effort for the future of Boston's schools and the City of Boston. We have the opportunity to adopt an assignment plan that gives parents greater choice, maintains racial fairness, and improve the quality of education for all our students.

The proposed plan gives all parents an opportunity to choose a school for their children. Under the current system, only a few well informed and highly motivated parents are able to select among the limited number of seats available in the magnet system. While approximately 17 percent of Boston's students attend elementary and middle magnet schools chosen by their parents, 83 percent are assigned solely on the basis of where they live. The proposed new plan will make all schools "schools of choice."

The plan will motivate all schools to find ways to become attractive to students and parents by improving the quality of education offered. The proposed plan encourages teachers, principals and parents to work together to make their schools better able to attract students. It will introduce a new level of accountability. When parents choose schools, they will conduct a referendum on which schools are attractive and which are not.

While maintaining racial fairness and a unitary school system, the proposed choice plan will minimize unnecessary transportation. Under the current plan, students are moved unnecessarily from one part of the city to another, only to end up at a school that is no different in racial composition from schools nearer their home. Over the past two years, I have heard parents say over and over again that they care first about quality education and then about proximity. Parents want the best possible school for their children as close as possible to home.

The proposed assignment plan offers greater stability and predictability. We must follow through on this promise by offering early choices and early assignments through effective Parent Information Centers. Our goal must be to inform every parent of the choices available, not merely those who are highly motivated and accustomed to making choices.

During the extensive process of developing this plan, the consultants tapped the enthusiasm of parents and teachers for new programs. To some extent, the School Department may find funds to implement new programming within the current budget or through the use of discretionary state funds. Any discussion of additional funding must wait for the formal budget process, after we learn the impact of the Commonwealth's current fiscal crisis on local aid and the total city budget. Over the past few years, we have offered unprecedented financial support for our schools, funding an FY89 increase at over double the rate of inflation. I anticipate difficult decisions ahead, and I fully intend to share them with you.

I am pleased that the consultants assure us that the staff necessary to administer the new choice plan can come from reassignments of current personnel. In addition, they have

developed the concept of cross zone access for those programs not currently available in a given zone. This, combined with appropriate principal reassignments, gives the School Committee and the Superintendent the opportunity to legislate and implement the new student assignment plan without compromising the concept of equity among the three zones.

I trust that we will sustain this important collaboration during the critical days ahead. I know that Dr. Willie and Mr. Alves will make themselves available to answer your questions and incorporate your comments. I hope that you will move to a vote as swiftly as possible so that Superintendent Wilson may begin the challenging task of implementation immediately.

Respectfully,

Raymond L. Flynn
Mayor of Boston

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

I. INTRODUCTION 1

OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS 1
What We Have Learned About Boston 3

THE CURRENT SITUATION AND CONTROLLED CHOICE. 9
Racial Fairness 10
Educational Enhancement 11
Educational Equity. 11

THE PROPOSED PLAN. 15
Governing Principles. 15

II. SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSED CONTROLLED CHOICE PLAN FOR ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS 18

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS 18

Equity Safeguards 18
Scope Of The Plan 19
Administrative Requirements 20
High Schools. 22

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ZONES. 25

THE NORTH ZONE 25

Geographic Features 25
Racial And Ethnic Diversity 26
Current School Assignments 27
New School Assignments. 27
Non-Public School Students. 27
Schools Of Choice 28

THE WEST ZONE. 28

Geographic Features 28
Racial And Ethnic Diversity 29
Current Student Assignments 29
New School Assignments 30
Non-Public School Students 30
Schools Of Choice 31

THE EAST ZONE 31

Geographic Features 31
Racial And Ethnic Diversity 32
Current School Assignments 32
New School Assignments 33
Non-Public School Students 33
Schools Of Choice 34

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY 34

East Zone Improvement Plan 34
North Zone 36
West Zone 38

ZONE ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS 39

Zone Superintendents. 39
Office Of The Zone Superintendents. 39
Parent Information And Student Assignment Centers . 40
Zone School Improvement And Planning Councils . . . 41
School-Based Initiatives. 43
Staff Development And In-Service Training 44

PROVISIONS FOR FACILITIES USE. 45
Determination Of Instructional Capacities 45
Identification Of Available Instructional Space . . 45
Allocation Of Available Space At Grade Level. . . . 46

SCHOOL SELECTION AND ASSIGNMENT PROCESS. 48
Early And Timely Assignments. 48
Kinds Of Assignments. 48
Proposed Schedule Of Assignments. 49
Kindergarten. 49
Rising First, Sixth And Ninth Grade Students. . . . 51
Voluntary Transfers And Students Clearing The Waiting List 52
Newly Enrolling Students Grades 2-12. 52
Mainstreaming SPED and TBE Students 52
Changes of Residence 53
Homeless Students 53

THE ACCOMMODATION OF CHOICE. 54

School Choices. 54
Oversubscription. 54
Siblings 54
Closest To School 54
Random Lottery 55
Waiting Lists 55

Undersubscription 55
Clearing Waiting Lists 56
Mandatory Assignments 56
Voluntary Transfers 56
Hardship Appeals 56

Underutilized Schools and School Improvement . . . 56
Year One Requirements 57
Year Two Requirements 57
Year Three Requirements 58

III. EDUCATIONAL ENHANCEMENTS 59
Full-Day K2 Classes And First-Grade In Same School. 59
Early Learning Programs. 63
Two-way Bilingual Or Multicultural Schools 64

IV. PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE 66
Year One Implementation 66
Student Assignments 66
Grandfathering 66
Non-Grandfathered Students 67
New Students 67

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES 67
Decentralization 67
Educational Equity 69
External Advisors 70
Capital Improvements 70
Timetable. 71

APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Boston Education Plan:
Student Assignment Process 71

Appendix B: Zone Student Profiles 71

PREFACE

Mayor Raymond L. Flynn asked us, in August, 1988, to assist in the development of a permanent and fair Student Assignment Plan for the Boston Public Schools. In the process of doing this, he suggested that we meet with school officials, educational advocates, community leaders and parents.

We held numerous meetings during the months of September, October, November and December. In our opinion, the planning process was as important as the plan. It was truly collaborative. Our work was facilitated by the cooperative ways that the staff of the Office of the Mayor, members of the School Committee, the Superintendent of Schools and staff of the Boston Public Schools worked together and with us. John M. Halloran and Dr. Clarence Hoover, of the School Department and Ellen Guiney and Martin Liebowitz of the Office of the Mayor were particularly helpful and so were the comments of citizens and community groups. With sympathetic ears, we listened to many people an synthesized their ideas into a workable Student Assignment Plan that enhances education, is racially fair and provides students with numerous school choices.

The Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan, that we have prepared for the Boston Public Schools, builds upon the previous good work of the Superintendent of Schools, the School Committee and the United States District Court. Moreover, we believe that the proposed plan is consistent with all outstanding court orders in Morgan v. Nucci and is in conformity with the U. S. Court of Appeals ruling of September 28, 1987.

In our judgment, the proposed Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan supports excellence without compromising equity.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles V. Willie
Michael J. Alves
Consultants

December 13, 1988

Undersubscription 55
Clearing Waiting Lists 56
Mandatory Assignments 56
Voluntary Transfers 56
Hardship Appeals 56

Underutilized Schools and School Improvement . . . 56
Year One Requirements 57
Year Two Requirements 57
Year Three Requirements 58

III. EDUCATIONAL ENHANCEMENTS 59
Full-Day K2 Classes And First-Grade In Same School. 59
Early Learning Programs. 63
Two-way Bilingual Or Multicultural Schools 64

IV. PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE 66
Year One Implementation 66
Student Assignments 66
Grandfathering 66
Non-Grandfathered Students 67
New Students 67

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES 67
Decentralization 67
Educational Equity 69
External Advisors 70
Capital Improvements 70
Timetable. 71

APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Boston Education Plan:
Student Assignment Process 71

Appendix B: Zone Student Profiles 71

I. INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

For the past several months, we have served the Boston community as school planning consultants. The operating styles of the planners and the requirements of the planning enterprise always differ from one community to another. No two planning consultations are exactly alike: moreover, planners are viewed differently in different communities.

Some planners are viewed in some communities as innovators who are brought in to stir up a system so that it can move in new directions. Others view planners as figureheads who are expected to legitimize decisions that already have been made. Planners sometimes are consulted for their expertise in anticipating domain conflict among vested interest groups and in proposing conflict-resolution approaches. Some planners function as gatekeepers who open up the decision-making process to dissident groups. In summary, the professional planning role is alternatively viewed as that of broker, advocate, change agent, and figurehead. Because some of these functions are incompatible with each other, for example, those of change agent and figurehead, we believe it is important to first share with the community our conception of our role as educational planners.

Over the past several months, we have functioned in the Boston community largely as brokers and, secondarily, as advocates. We were asked to serve by the Mayor. In doing so, he asked that we listen to parents and consult with a range of individuals and constituent groups so that we could identify areas of agreement and disagreement about the

Boston Public Schools. We also have accepted the responsibility of trying to bring disparate interests together on common ground when it can be found. In general, we have discovered more agreement than disagreement among concerned citizens in the community regarding new directions for education in Boston. We consider our broker role a primary responsibility. We have tried to mediate differences. To function this way, one must be in contact with competing interest groups. We have met with many different individuals and organizations and are sharing in this report some of the observations that participants in these groups have made. We have tried to listen carefully and respond sympathetically.

Because the contemporary school planning process in Boston is anchored in a school desegregation court case, we accepted an advocacy role as one of our secondary responsibilities. Any student assignment plan adopted by this community that might violate the court-determined rights of the plaintiff class could return operation of the Boston Public Schools to court supervision. Thus, our function as advocates has been that of ensuring that the constitutional requirement of a unitary, desegregated school system should be one major test of the efficacy of any plans proposed. Plans that do not meet this test, we believe, will not pass muster. We also advocate special attention in planning for the education of students with special needs, such as bilingual and special education students.

Beyond our broker and advocacy roles, we have tried to function as genuine consultants, not as decision-makers. We understand that policy-making authority for public education ultimately is vested in the state education agency and is delegated by the state to the local education

agency, the School Committee. Our consultation is for the purpose of advising local decision-makers, including the School Committee, the Superintendent, the Mayor, parents and interest groups on the consequences of alternative actions and strategies based on what we know about Boston, what we have experienced in other communities and what our own educational research and policy studies and those of others have revealed.

In this report, we share with the community in a public way our recommendations for a new Student Assignment Plan for Boston. We have received valuable help in forming this plan from our numerous consultations with School Department staff, School Committee members, Superintendent Laval Wilson, Mayor Raymond Flynn, City Hall administrators and community groups. Many of our recommendations have been advanced by others and some recommendations are new formulations of our own.

What We Have Learned About Boston

So that concerns about schooling in Boston, concerns that we heard in our many consultations, may be known by others we include a selected list of ideas and information that we received as we visited with school and community representatives. These concerns have neither been organized by themes nor evaluated for their validity. The following are some of the raw and unrefined statements that were made to us in various meetings which, we believe, are representative of the thinking and feeling of many:

1. "People are less concerned about where their children go to school, but are more concerned about what their children learn."

2. "People are high on Hernandez School."

3. "Boston Public Schools should consider establishing more two-way bilingual schools (which some people call 'Multicultural' schools)."

4. "Parents have to be persuaded that the Boston Public Schools are safe."

5. "Some parents are concerned that a disproportionate number of blacks students received .4 placements in special education."

6. "Are the Boston Public Schools exceeding the three-year length of placement of some linguistic minorities in bilingual programs?"

7. "Staff developed programs are needed, especially in 'franchising' good school programs to new locations."

8. "Community superintendents should have more authority as administrators and educational planners."

9. "Parents who do not speak English need support in dealing with schools in which their children are enrolled."

10. "Leadership by the headmaster and faculty is essential in schools that are sensitive to students' needs."

11. "Some students would have remained in Boston Public Schools if they could have continued in the same elementary school which they attended as a kindergarten student."

12. "There are some excellent, well qualified people in the Boston Public Schools but the system does not market itself effectively so that the public knows the good things that are available."

13. "The school system is not funded adequately to handle capital improvements."

14. "The school system should provide buses to pick up high school students at subway stops and deliver them to schools in selected neighborhoods."

15. "We should allocate seats in regular classrooms for special education students so that they can be mainstreamed in the same school."

16. "We need to determine the number of students in East Boston who have attended schools outside that area as well as those who live elsewhere in the city who have attended East Boston schools. Such data would indicate the level of educational traffic that exists or has existed between East Boston and the remainder of the

city and the possibility of making available to East Boston students educational opportunities elsewhere in the city."

17. "Workers skilled in the crafts are not so much needed in the Boston labor force today as are employees with a broader education background."

18. "School-based management is necessary so that schools can be held accountable; this way, classroom teachers and building principals can become full partners in the educational enterprise."

19. "The Boston Teachers' Union must be involved in defining the meaning of school-based management."

20. "Boston has too many high schools. The number should be reduced from seventeen to possibly ten."

21. "K through 8 schools should be considered as alternatives to K through 5 schools and middle schools."

22. "Greater effort in obtaining parent participation in educational planning is essential."

23. "The Boston Public Schools need to give more attention to planning; also distinction should be made between policy-making and management functions in public education and the separate and joint responsibilities of the School Committee and the School Department."

24. "Student Attendance Zones, when possible, should reflect citywide racial ratios; should join together neighborhoods that are contiguous; and should take into consideration natural transportation patterns."

25. "Advanced work classes should be accommodated at each school and the present arrangement of sending students away from their primary school of enrollment for such classes should be phased out."

26. "Kindergarten enrollment should make one eligible to continue to attend other grades in the same school."

27. "Parent Information Centers are essential. There should be immediate movement toward establishing them in each of the Student Attendance Zones."

28. "If more magnet schools are created at the elementary and middle school levels, they should be zone magnets rather than citywide magnets."

29. "All of the schools in Boston should be desegregated and should remain desegregated."

30. "Consider a citywide attendance zone for all high schools; an alternative to this policy is to locate at least two comprehensive high schools in each Student Attendance Zone but permit students to select high schools not in their attendance zone too."

31. "Stability and continuity are important concepts to consider in designing a new student attendance plan."

32. "Bilingual and special education programs should be genuinely transitional programs so that students are eventually mainstreamed. However, the problem with mainstreaming is there is no mainstream in the Boston Public Schools."

33. "A citywide magnet high school that would focus on the educational concerns of linguistic minorities and new-comers to this country should be considered."

34. "We should expand the community school model in which schools serve the community after school hours."

35. "Consultation should be continuous with the plaintiff class in Boston since the schools are under court order to redress their grievances."

36. "Early Learning Programs and Exte[illegible] Programs are essential in encouraging people [illegible] now attend the Boston Public Schools to [illegible]eturn to the system; also consideration shou[illegible]ven to extending kindergarten so that it is an [illegible]ire day rather than a half day."

37. "High schools ought to have about 2,000 students in each building so that an enriched curriculum can be offered."

38. "Special education needs to follow a flexible service delivery model so that students can be mainstreamed when appropriate; moreover, special education students should be assigned to many different schools so that no school is labeled as 'the special education school.'"

39. "Consider services that selected schools should provide such as health care and other services that support learning."

40. "Boston should consider establishing a 'new-comer' high school that is similar to one San Francisco established in 1979. Such a school provides transitional educational programs for foreign-born, high school-age students who do not have adequate fluency in English."

41. "All schools should have student bodies of white students and students from at least two of the other three largest racial minority and ethnic groups in Boston; however, a quota for these racial and ethnic groups is not necessary."

42. "If the examination schools in Boston are oversubscribed, then the admissions process should give preference to students who are from the Boston Public Schools."

43. "There ought to be some consideration given to homeless families including schools of enrollment for their children."

In addition to our meetings and discussions with parents, educators and community representatives, we have also analyzed the structure of the existing court-ordered student assignment plan. In particular, with assistance from School Department planners, we conducted a detailed analysis of the efficacy of the system's eight community districts and its citywide magnet school district. On the basis of our analysis, we concluded that the current configuration of attendance areas in the Boston Public Schools were no longer feasible in light of the goals of the new proposed Student Assignment Plan. The major problems with the current configuration are that they are not equivalent in terms of racial and ethnic diversity, neighborhood cohesion and range of school facilities and programmatic options. We also reviewed the current situation with the Superintendent of Schools and his planning staff.

This collaboration supported the Superintendent's earlier findings that the current student assignment plan has five major weaknesses (see pp. 72 in Appendix. "A. PROBLEM STATEMENT" for a more detailed description):

1. Boston's student assignment process is complex and lacks predictability; this works against parents who cannot devote considerable time and energy to understanding the system;

2. Racial guidelines raise concerns about the fairness of the assignment process and limit access to some schools and programs;

3. The assignment process has significant operational problems around the timing of assignments, the materials describing assignments, the treatment of parents and the assignment geocodes;

4. Many parents have their hopes raised by the choices in the assignment process, are disappointed when they do not get into magnet schools and are frustrated that there are no other options;

5. The assignment process puts the responsibility for desegregation on the central office; there are few incentives for principals and headmasters to desegregate their schools.

On the basis of what we have learned about the Boston Public Schools, we recommend that the system adopt a Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan.

Much of what we heard has been incorporated into the Student Assignment Plan that we have proposed. Some of what we heard requires action that is beyond our mandate. Extensive quotes have been offered so that the community may recognize our plan as one that attempts to respond to and harmonize the many different attitudes and orientations of Boston parents, public officials and advocacy groups about public schools.

In addition to our role as consultants, we urge Boston to turn to other advisers who have had extensive experience in enhancing their school systems using some of the approaches that we have recommended. Such advisers can help inform the various constituent groups in Boston about implementing new and improved educational services effectively, how to deal with problems that may appear during the implementation process and cost factors. Specifically, we encourage the Boston community to invite:

1. Buffalo Superintendent, Eugene Revielle, to share his experiences in the development and implementation of Early Learning Programs and Extended Day Programs;

2. Cambridge School Officers, Dorothy Jones, Margaret Gallagher and Peter Colleary, to share their extensive experience in the development of a successful Parent Information Center and student assignment policy for a Controlled Choice Plan;

3. Fred Houle of Fall River Public Schools and George Tsapatsaris of Lowell Public Schools, to share important information about Parent Information Centers and how they may function effectively for linguistic minorities;

4. Karen Patton, Principal, Hughes School, Syracuse Public Schools, to share her good experience in providing special education for a variety of students and in mainstreaming them, when appropriate, in the same school;

5. Collin Williams of the Seattle Public Schools, who supervised development of the Controlled Choice plan for Seattle, to share his experience in redeploying the professional staff to zones that were inequitably weak and to share his experience in rerouting a public school transportation system to accommodate Controlled Choice.

We have worked with these individuals in other settings and know that they would be of inestimable value to Boston as it implements a new and exciting Student Assignment Plan.

We are prepared, if requested, to work with Boston school officials in developing a detailed operational plan for implementation, once the new assignment plan has been ratified.

THE CURRENT SITUATION AND CONTROLLED CHOICE

After thirteen years of court-ordered school desegregation, Boston has now earned the privilege of developing a creative Student Assignment Plan that achieves three important goals simultaneously. Based on what we have learned about the Boston Public Schools, we recommend that the School Committee adopt and implement a Controlled Choice plan. If designed and implemented correctly, this plan will work to guarantee

racial fairness, enhance education and provide parents and students with increased choice of elementary, middle and high schools.

Moreover, Controlled Choice is an innovative and comprehensive method of assignment that seeks to maximize parental and student choice of schools within a racially unitary, equitable and enhanced system of public education. A well-designed and implemented Controlled Choice plan will work to eliminate all vestiges of unlawful segregation, prohibit future discriminatory assignment practices and will create a more equitable framework within which parents, students and educators can operate an educationally diverse and distinguished system of public schools.

Racial Fairness

Controlled Choice is a constitutionally defensible and permissible student assignment strategy because it guarantees equitable school desegregation. While Controlled Choice allows parents and students to make multiple school selections by their own rank-order of preference, no student is guaranteed his or her first choice school and all available school space must be allocated in a way that is inherently fair to all racial groups. Moreover, Controlled Choice ensures that minority and majority race students are afforded genuine proportional access to all schools and programs of choice and that the actual enrollment of all desegregating schools is reflective of the racial diversity of the system as a whole.

Educational Enhancement

Controlled Choice enhances the quality of education because it alters the balance of educational empowerment in a way that obligates every school to provide an attractive learning environment. Just as no student is guaranteed his or her first choice school, no principals or headmasters are guaranteed that parents and students will select their schools. In a well designed and implemented Controlled Choice plan, every parent will be empowered to choose the school one deems most appropriate for his or her children and administrators and teachers will be empowered to develop and provide the best educational program that will make their school attractive. Consequently, there is an existential dimension to a Controlled Choice plan that should work to generate more student-centered and school-specific educational reforms.

Educational Equity

Two fundamental tenets of a good school system are:

1. that all students have a right to an instructionally effective, desegregated education; and

2. that no students should be educationally disenfranchised or disadvantaged because of where they live in the community.

Because Controlled Choice encourages individual schools to make themselves attractive, it also works to identify what is best in the system and focuses attention on what needs to be improved. The advantage of Controlled Choice over other student assignment strategies is that it provides a continuous referendum on public schooling and consequently provides a mandate for school improvement where it is

needed most. AN IMPORTANT POINT TO BE UNDERSTOOD IS THAT IN A CONTROLLED CHOICE PLAN THERE IS SIMPLY NO INCENTIVE OR REWARD FOR OPERATING AN UNATTRACTIVE OR INSTRUCTIONALLY INEFFECTIVE SCHOOL.

A well designed Controlled Choice plan provides increased options regarding schools of enrollment because all schools within an attendance zone and under certain conditions are available to all students. Controlled Choice enables parents and students to visit schools, observe their styles of teaching and to choose schools by rank-ordered preference whose programs and practices correspond best to their learning needs.

Moreover, Controlled Choice empowers parents by providing more choices for them and their children regarding schools of matriculation. It empowers principals, headmasters and teachers by encouraging them to develop learning opportunities and environments that are attractive to students. It empowers local educational agencies in that they can hold schools accountable to make themselves attractive, if students and parents turn away from them in large numbers during the choice process.

Beyond these important features, Controlled Choice has other benefits. It breaks the hostage relationship between real estate interests and educational interests. Public schools rightfully belong to all of the people and should be available to all of the people within limits of practicality and should not be reserved exclusively for those who live in selected neighborhoods. By clustering into a single attendance zone several residential areas, enough schools of varying characteristics are available to serve the comprehensive learning needs of students without transporting many of them to distant sectors of the city. These Student Attendance Zones facilitate the development of a rational and single

transportation system that can deliver children with multiple learning needs to a variety of schools within a zone.

Controlled Choice also has additional benefits with reference to stability, flexibility and continuity. Each zone should have a variety of elementary and middle schools so that students may have foreknowledge about specific educational opportunities available at the next level when one level of education has been completed. After a student has been accepted in any school, he or she should have the privilege of remaining in that school until the final grade for its specific level of education has been completed. A student also should have the privilege of transferring from one school to another within the same zone if the other school seems to be more suitable.

Controlled Choice has administrative features that are beneficial. Each zone may be operated more or less as a relatively small school system. Thus, an opportunity to achieve decentralization in the educational bureaucracy is possible. Since each school is obligated to become attractive to students, greater school-based management and accountability could flow from this requirement. Moreover, with a Controlled Choice plan, state and local education authorities and school officials are provided a powerful administrative tool with which to ensure that the quality of education is distributed in a cost effective and equitable manner throughout the entire school system.

Finally, Controlled Choice is a beneficial Student Assignment Plan because it is grounded in equity and fairness. Choice alone does not ensure that everyone will benefit. Therefore, if all racial and ethnic groups are to benefit from educational reforms, they must first be guaranteed genuine proportional access to all schools and programs of

choice. Also, because students have the privilege of choosing among a range of schools within their attendance zone, all zones within the city must become educationally equivalent. This equivalency requirement is an important equity feature that must govern the distribution of common educational resources among zones.

THE PROPOSED PLAN

Governing Principles

We believe that the proposed Controlled Choice plan for the Boston Public Schools promotes excellence without compromising equity. For this reason, we believe this Student Assignment Plan fulfills court-ordered requirements to operate a unitary school system that does not discriminate against white, black or other minority students or any sector of the city. By enhancing the educational offerings of the school system, we believe that this plan will encourage many students enrolled in private and independent schools to return to the Boston Public Schools.

Beyond having benefits that transcend those of other plans mentioned, the proposed Controlled Choice plan is of value because, as mentioned earlier, it guarantees desegregation, enhances education and provides choice of schools and achieves these goals simultaneously. This is something of value that differs from the accomplishments of other plans that have attempted to achieve only one of these goals or all of these goals but in a serial way.

By requiring each attendance zone to plan a comprehensive education for all students living therein, Controlled Choice plans for advanced students as well as for those with limitations. Indeed, Controlled Choice advocates planning for special-needs students before or at the same time one plans for regular and gifted students so that special-needs students also may experience continuity in their education. Too often, the allocation of seats in school buildings for special-needs

students -- especially those in bilingual and special education -- is done after seats have been allocated for regular students. Under those conditions, planning for special-needs students is a residual activity.

Our opinion is that a great school system plans first for its students who are at risk. Thus, we urge the Boston Public Schools to allocate seats within zone schools for bilingual and special education students in a way that will permit such students to receive a mainstream education within the same school building when practicable and certainly in a way that will permit such student to be promoted from one grade to another without having to move to a different building each time one is promoted.

Because several different plans for desegregating the public schools have been proposed over the years and sanctioned by the courts, Controlled Choice may be confused as another version of one of these plans, which it is not. Therefore, a brief clarification of what Controlled Choice is not should be made.

The proposed Controlled Choice plan is not a freedom-of-choice or open enrollment plan as used in the past. In Controlled Choice, the local educational agency honors the rank-ordered preference of a student only if the student's presence in a school does not violate racial fairness parameters. Despite this limitation or control on the choice process, three out of every four students within a zone probably will obtain their first choice when the plan is introduced; after it has been in operation for a few years, 90 percent of the students probably will obtain their first choice. Freedom-of-choice plans, on the other hand, guarantee that all preferences will be honored despite segregative effects. Consequently, they have been failures in achieving desegre-

gated student bodies within specific schools. But Controlled Choice guarantees school desegregation first and then honors parental and student choices.

Controlled Choice is not another version of the voucher plan that would permit public school students to enroll in private and independent schools with vouchers drawn against public monies. Beyond the questionable practice of using public funds for private and independent schooling, the voucher plan permits schools to accept or reject applicants. Controlled Choice differs from the voucher plan in that student choice is limited first to public schools, second to public schools within equivalent zones and third to zone schools that are racially and ethnically diversified. Moreover, in Controlled Choice the student selects the school; the school does not have the authority to reject the student.

II. SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSED CONTROLLED CHOICE PLAN FOR THE BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In order to ensure that the new school choice plan conforms to federal and state anti-discrimination requirements and is administratively feasible, the consultants have designed a plan that is inherently fair to all racial, ethnic and linguistic groups and that is practicable. Moreover, we have designed a "living" and "stable" Student Assignment Plan that will self-adjust to changing social and demographic circumstances over time and that will better accommodate the varying educational needs and interests of students, parents and educators during the life of the plan.

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Equity Safeguards

Under this proposed plan, parents of elementary and middle school students will be allowed to make multiple school selections by their own rank-order of preference within their geographic zone. All parents and students will be given a range of elementary and middle school choices. While parents and students cannot be guaranteed their first choice school, all parents will be empowered to make informed educational decisions and all students will be guaranteed stability of assignment. Once enrolled, all students will be assured of stability of assignment. Students who do not receive their first choice, may, if they wish, request to be placed on a waiting list for their preferred school. The waiting list will be cleared annually before seats in a school are assigned to others.

The plan also is designed to be more responsive to the way families live in the City of Boston. Thus, within the constraints imposed by racial fairness and available school space, the plan will enable parents to enroll more than one child in the same school if educationally appropriate and gives a conditional priority of assignment to students who live closest to their first choice school. Parents and students will be given ample time to make their school selections, and specific measures have been taken to enable parents to visit schools and obtain assistance before they submit their school choice applications. The actual school selection and assignment process will operate on an early and timely basis with a specific and predictable schedule of assignments for each kind of assignment required within the Boston Public Schools.

Scope Of The Plan

As the system's sole method of assignment, the proposed plan will govern all student assignment decisions including: new admissions (K-8), students rising into elementary, middle and high schools, voluntary intra-zone transfers, changes of residence and students being cleared from waiting lists. Assignments of special education students will be made as currently proscribed by law, regulations and court orders. Program placement and assignments for students requiring transitional bilingual education will be governed by the assignment plan to the extent that it complies with provisions of the Voluntary LAU Compliance Agreement. Similarly, the expansion or consolidation of bilingual programs will be guided by the LAU Agreement.

Administrative Requirements

The plan creates three decentralized Student Attendance Zones in the west, east and north areas of the city. Each zone should have a Zone Superintendent with an appropriate professional support staff, a zone School Improvement and Planning Council and a center for staff development and in-service training. The plan also establishes decentralized Parent Information and Student Assignment Centers in each attendance zone. These centers will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the proposed assignment plan within each zone for elementary and middle school assignments. Each center will have a Student Assignment Officer who will be solely responsible for making all final assignment decisions and who will report to the Zone Superintendent. The Department of Implementation will retain its oversight authority for certifying all student assignments. Each center will have a director and parent coordinators who will be responsible for administering the school selection and student registration process. The Parent Information Center will have a support staff sufficient to carry out the parent outreach and information activities required in the plan.

Each zone will have a transportation officer who will be responsible for developing yellow bus transportation routes for all schools in the zone (regular, bilingual and special education). Transportation routes, time schedules and pickup locations will be made available to parents and students during the school selection process and will be included as part of their informational packets.

Each zone will have bilingual staff coordinated with the Language Assessment Center, capable of conducting LAU testing in the major language groups in a respective zone. Bilingual staff will work under

the supervision of the Zone Superintendent and the system's bilingual education director. The Zone Superintendent and bilingual education director will have responsibility for ensuring that all students eligible for bilingual education receive appropriate placement and services. Where feasible, the plan provides for bilingual placements on an intra-zone basis and, when necessary, on an inter-zone basis. Inter-zone arrangements may be necessary for linguistic groups that are small in number. When possible, schools used for citywide bilingual assignments should be located near the intersections of the three zones so that an inter-zone transportation system can be used.

Each zone will have special needs staff capable of assisting parents of students requiring special education services in obtaining appropriate program placements and services. All schools will provide a floor of services for special education students. Students requiring services in prototype .4 or higher will also be provided service in a range of schools that are educationally appropriate.

The schedule of assignments and school selection process will be designed to allow bilingual and special needs students (.4 or above) to be placed before regular education students. In addition, the allocation of instructional space within each school will include space sufficient to accommodate mainstreaming bilingual and special needs students into regular education classes when educationally appropriate during the school year.

Students who do not obtain their first choice school will be automatically placed on a waiting list for their first choice school. Waiting lists will be established after each assignment cycle and randomly ordered for that period. Waiting lists will be cleared before the

end of the school year, before the beginning of the next school year and during the first marking period of the current school year of application. The clearing of waiting lists will be subject to the racial desegregation and administrative provisions of the plan.

The plan will provide a hardship appeals process for parents who are dissatisfied with their child's final assignment. The system will establish a Hardship Appeals Board comprised of educators and citizens who function as a jury. Each appeal will be reviewed on a case-specific basis and the decision of the Hardship Appeals Board will be final. The disposition of all appeals will be subject to the desegregation constraints of the plan.

High Schools

The proposed school choice plan by zones is limited to elementary and middle schools. More specific and concentrated attention is needed for the development of an effective high school choice plan.

High school students in the Boston Public Schools are approximately 15,000 in number. There are seventeen high schools in the city of Boston. Some are over-subscribed in terms of the facility; and others are underutilized. Some are in rather old structures; others are relatively new. About half of the high school buildings in Boston were erected fifty years ago or earlier.

A 1986 report of the Superintendent's Research Advisory Committee on Secondary Schools concluded that there are excess high schools and recommended closing some, upgrading others and enhancing the academic

offerings of all high schools that do not require an examination for admission. These recommendations were offered to overcome the high vacancy rate, the high retention-in-grade rate and the high drop out rate in Boston high schools.

Since some high schools are not attracting sufficient numbers of students and there is excess capacity at the high school level, some high schools could be consolidated to provide sufficient resources for a more enriched curriculum.

In addition to upgrading the physical plant and curriculum of some district high schools, student organizational activities, including clubs and intramural sports, should be further developed in these institutions. The recommendations for high school curricula changes and student activities development presented in the report of the Superintendent's Research Advisory Committee and in the 1987 Boston Education Plan are, in our opinion, incomplete. The high school situation in Boston is in crisis and needs immediate and careful attention.

The high school crisis is severe because 40 percent of all high school students drop out before graduation and because approximately one of every two students who do graduate does not pursue post-secondary education. Thus, the high school education that half of the graduates receive must equip them for immediate performance in the labor force and for effective participation in society as citizens.

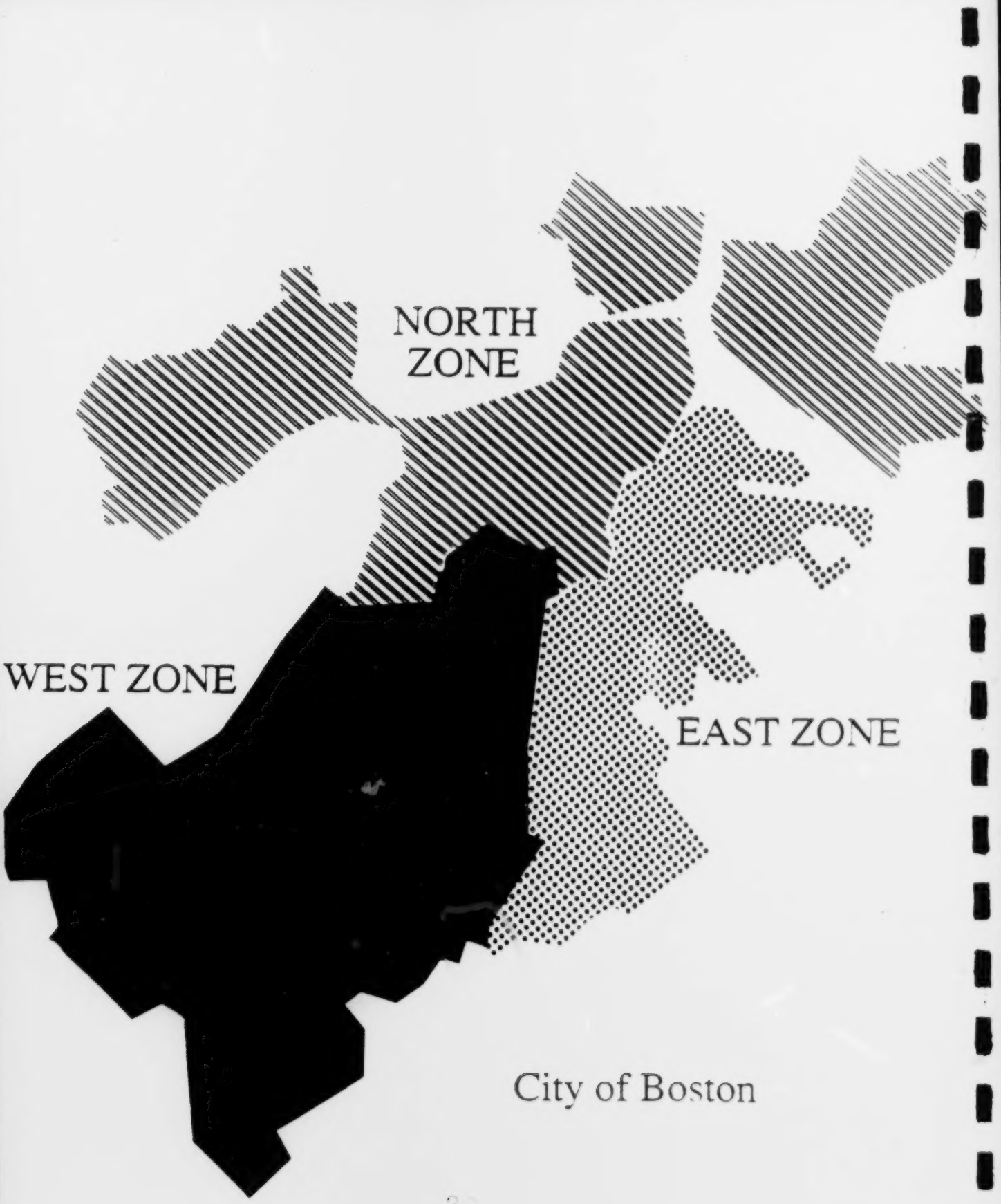
In the light of the truncated planning period within which we have operated, it would be a disservice to the cause of quality secondary education in Boston for us to propose changes without a more thorough study.

We, therefore, make the following recommendations:

1. a three-person panel of experts on high school education, consisting of eminent professionals and practitioners, like, for example, Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot, Robert Sperber, Theodore Sizer, Robert Dentler and Kenneth Haskins be commissioned to make a five to six month study of the high school situation in Boston and to report findings and recommendations to the Superintendent and to the School Committee in the summer of 1989; and

2. that concurrent with such a study and until it is completed, high school enrollment be permitted on a city-wide basis with transportation provided as feasible. This recommendation means that no student will be locked into a high school that he or she believes is inadequate. Such a recommendation is consistent with the Controlled Choice policy for elementary and middle schools;

3. that eighth grade students be allowed to select their high schools of choice under the provisions of the new Controlled Choice Plan, effective for the 1989-90 school year.


NORTH
ZONE
WEST ZONE
EAST ZONE
City of Boston

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ZONES

Under the proposed Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan, all of the systems seventy-five elementary and twenty-one middle schools are reorganized into three residential attendance zones. No student is assigned to a school on the basis of his or her "geocode" and all elementary and middle schools located within each zone are to be made available to all parents and students residing in the zone as a desegregating school of choice.

Parents and students will be allowed to select as many schools as are available by their own rank order of preference. These may be schools near their homes or other schools in their respective zones. The following is a description of each of the proposed zones.

THE NORTH ZONE

Geographic Features

The North Zone encompasses an area of about sixteen square miles. The zone spans the northern boundaries of the city and includes the neighborhoods of Allston-Brighton, Mission Hill, Fenway, Back Bay, Chinatown, North End, South End, Beacon Hill, Charlestown and East Boston. More precisely, the proposed North Zone includes all of Community Districts I and VIII and all of VII with the exception of geocodes 281, 282, 290, 291, 292, 293, 300, 301 and 302 which are to be relocated into the West Zone. The North Zone also includes geocodes 114, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 186, 191, 236, 237, 239, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 264, 267, 268, 269, 321, 324, 325, 327, 646 which are to be relocated from Community District VI.

The North Zone contains a number of unique characteristics that must be factored into the new plan. The North Zone is the only zone that is separated by the downtown commercial and business center of the city. East Boston is physically isolated from the rest of the zone by the Boston Harbor with the primary means of access being the Harbor Tunnel. Charlestown is also isolated from other neighborhoods and is connected to the downtown area by a single bridge. These physical constraints affect the design and implementation of the Controlled Choice plan in the North Zone. Outside city limits, the North Zone borders the communities of Winthrop, Revere, Chelsea, Everett, Somerville, Cambridge, Watertown, Newton and Brookline.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

As proposed, the North Zone has a resident kindergarten through eighth grade population of 14,234 students who are currently enrolled in the Boston Public Schools. Of these students, 25 percent are white, 32 percent are black, 17 percent are Asian and 26 percent are Hispanic. The North Zone is the most racially diverse zone in the new plan.

When compared to the racial/ethnic composition of K-8 students systemwide, the North Zone varies - 15 percentage points for blacks, + 9 percentage points for Asians, and + 6 percentage points for Hispanics. There is no variation for whites. Overall, the North Zone perfectly reflects the proportions of white and combined minority students in the system as a whole at the K-8 level.

Current School Assignments

Of the students residing in this zone, 9,910 are currently enrolled in regular classes (see p. 80 in Appendix "RegEd"), 2,706 in bilingual education programs (see p. 81 in Appendix "Bi-Lingual") mostly Hispanic and Chinese (see p. 82 in Appendix "Crosstabulation By Language and School") and 1,618 have IEP's requiring .4 or higher special education programs (see pp. 83-1 in Appendix "Spec. Needs and Bilingual/Spec. Needs") Of the students residing in this zone, 75 percent in this zone are now enrolled in schools located within the North Zone; 10 percent are enrolled in the proposed East Zone; 9 percent are in the West Zone; and 6 percent attend other citywide schools.

New School Assignments

The North Zone has 1,383 fifth graders and 1,257 eighth graders who will be enrolling into middle and high schools in the coming 1989-90 school year. In addition, the North Zone currently has 1,537 K2 students who will be entering first grade in the Fall of 1989 and at least 987 K1 students will be rising into K2 (full and half day) classes at the same time.

Overall at least 36 percent of the students residing in the North Zone will be eligible to receive a new school assignment in the 1989-90 school year.

Non-Public School Students

The North Zone has a total school-age population of 17,755 students at the K-8 level. Of these resident school-age students, 80 percent attend the Boston Public Schools (the highest of the three proposed

zones) and 20 percent attend private and parochial schools. Nearly 60 percent of the white school-age children in the North Zone attend the Boston Public Schools (also the highest of the three zones).

Schools of Choice

Parents and students who reside in the North Zone will be given a choice of twenty-seven elementary schools and six middle schools. The North Zone contains four elementary magnet schools: the Guild, Hennigan, Jackson-Mann and McKay. It also contains the Mackey middle magnet school. When the proposed Controlled Choice plan is fully implemented, these magnet schools will only enroll students residing in the North Zone. The thirty-three elementary and middle schools located in the North Zone have the capacity to enroll at least 16,000 students in grades K-8. These elementary schools are: the Adams, Alighieri, Baldwin, Blackstone, Bradley, Early Learning Center, Eliot, Emerson, Farragut, Gardner, Garfield, Guild, Hamilton, Harvard-Kent, Hennigan, Hurley, Jackson-Mann, P. Kennedy, Mason, McKay, O'Donnell, Otis, Quincy, Tobin, Warren-Prescott, Winship and Winthrop. The middle schools are: Barnes, Edison, Edwards, Mackey and Taft. Although not physically in the zone, the Dearborn would become a North Zone middle school.

THE WEST ZONE

Geographic Features

The West Zone is approximately eighteen square miles in size and includes the neighborhoods of Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Roslindale, West Roxbury, Hyde Park, Southern Mattapan and the Franklin Field section of Mattapan. Beyond the city limits, the West Zone is bordered by the

communities of Brookline, South Newton, Dedham and Milton. More precisely, the proposed West Zone includes all of Community District II and all of District III with the exception of geocodes: 439, 440, 441, 442, 444, 860, and 861 which are to be relocated into the East Zone. All of District IV is in the West Zone with the exception of geocodes 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 433, 434, and 829 which are to be relocated into the East Zone. This zone also includes those geocodes in the Roxbury neighborhood that have been relocated from District VII (see North Zone) and District V (see East Zone).

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

As proposed, the West Zone has a resident kindergarten through eighth grade student population of 14,547. Of these students, 26 percent are white, 52 percent are black, 2 percent are Asian, and 20 percent are Hispanic. When compared to the K-8 systemwide racial/ethnic proportions, the West Zone varies + 2 percentage points for whites, + 5 percentage points for blacks and - 6 percentage points for Asians. There is no variation from the systemwide proportion for Hispanics. Overall, the West Zone varies from the systemwide proportion of whites + 1 percentage point and from the systemwide proportion of combined minority students at the K-8 level - 1 percentage point.

Current Student Assignments

Of these students residing in the West Zone, 11,558 are enrolled in regular education classes (see p. 85 in Appendix "RegEd"), 1,444 are in bilingual education programs (see p. 8c in Appendix "Bi-Lingual") mostly

Hispanic (see p. 87 in Appendix "Crosstabulation by Language and Grade"), and 1,545 are in .4 or higher special education programs (see pp. 58-9 in Appendix "Spec.Needs" and "Bilingual/Spec.Needs").

With respect to current school assignments, 77 percent of the students are already enrolled in schools located in the West Zone. Conversely, 10 percent of the West Zone students are now in the East Zone, 6 percent are in the North Zone and 7 percent attend out-of-zone citywide magnet schools.

New School Assignments

The West Zone has 1,023 fifth graders and 1,030 eighth graders who will be entering into middle and high schools in the 1989-90 school year.

The West Zone has 1,308 K2 students who will be entering first grade in the Fall of 1989 and at least 1,002 K1 students who will be rising into K2 (full and/or half-day classes) at the same time.

Overall, at least 40 percent of the students currently residing in the West Zone will be eligible to receive a new school assignment in the 1989-90 school year.

Non-Public School Students

The West Zone has a total K-8 school-age population of 21,184 students. Of these resident school-age children, 69 percent attend the Boston Public Schools and 31 percent attend private and parochial schools. While nearly 80 percent of all black, Asian and Hispanic students attend the Boston Public Schools, 50 percent of the white school-age children are enrolled outside of the system.

Schools of Choice

Parents of school-age children residing in the West Zone will be given a choice of twenty-eight elementary schools and nine middle schools. The West Zone contains seven magnet schools: James M. Curley, Hale, Haley, Lewenberg, Ohrenberger, Trotter and Wheatley. In addition, the Hernandez school will remain a citywide school until its unique programs is replicated in each zone. The thirty-seven elementary and middle schools located in the West Zone have a capacity to enroll at least 18,000 students. These elementary schools are: Agassiz, Bates, Beethoven, Channing, Chittick, Conley, J. Curley, Ellis, Fuller, E. Greenwood, Grew, Hale, Haley, Higginson, J. Kennedy, Kilmer, Longfellow, Manning, Mattahunt, Mendell, Mozart, Ohrenberger, Parkman, Philbrick, F. Roosevelt, P. Shaw, Sumner, and Trotter. The middle schools are: Irving, Lewenberg, Lewis, M. Curley, R. Shaw, Rogers and Wheatley. (The Dearborn will become a North Zone school in this plan because of its geographic location adjacent to the zone. The Timilty will become a magnet school available on a citywide basis to students in all zones.)

THE EAST ZONE

Geographic Features

The East Zone is a crescent-shape area of approximately eight square miles and includes the neighborhoods of South Boston, Dorchester, and Southern Mattapan. Beyond the city limits, the East Zone borders the communities of Quincy and Milton. More precisely, the proposed East Zone includes all of Community District V with the exception of geocodes 265, 266, 296, 311, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323 and 838 which are relocated

into the West Zone. Most of District VI is located in the East Zone with the exception of those geocodes in the Lower Roxbury/Orchard Park area that have been relocated into the North Zone. The East Zone also includes those geocodes that have been relocated from District III (the Lee School area) and District IV (see West Zone).

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

The East Zone has a resident student population of 13,652 at the K-8 level. Of these students, 24 percent are white, 58 percent are black, 5 percent are Asian, and 13 percent are Hispanic. When compared to the K-8 systemwide racial/ethnic proportions, the East Zone varies + 11 percentage points for blacks, - 3 percentage points for Asians, and - 7 percentage points for Hispanics. There is only a - 1 percentage point variation from the systemwide proportion for whites. As in the West Zone, the East Zone varies only + and - 1 percentage point from the systemwide proportions of white and combined minority students at the K-8 level.

Current School Assignments

Of the students residing in the East Zone, 10,834 are enrolled in regular education classes (see p.90 in Appendix "RegEd"); 1,381 are in bilingual education programs (see p.91 "Bi-Lingual") mostly Hispanic, Cape Verdean and Haitian (see p.92 in Appendix "Crosstablulation by Language and Grade"); and 1,437 are in .4 or higher special education programs (see pp.93-4 in Appendix "Spec. Needs and "Bilingual/Spec.

Needs". Of these students, 78 percent are currently enrolled in schools located within the East Zone; 12 percent are enrolled in the West Zone; 4 percent are enrolled in the North Zone; and 6 percent attend out-of-zone citywide magnet schools.

New School Assignments

The East Zone has 1,231 fifth graders and 1,184 eighth graders who will be matriculating into middle and high schools in the 1989-90 school year. The East Zone also has 1,443 K2 students who will be entering first grade in the Fall of 1989 and at least 1,010 K1 students will be rising into K2 (full and/or half day) classes at the same time.

Overall, at least 37 percent of the students residing in the East Zone will be eligible to receive a new school assignment for the 1989-90 school year.

Non-Public School Students

The East Zone has a total school-age population of 19,218 at the K-8 level. Of these resident school-age students, 71 percent attend the Boston Public Schools and 29 percent attend private and parochial schools. A vast majority of black, Asian, and Hispanic students residing in the East Zone attend the Boston Public Schools. On the other hand, a majority (about 52 percent) of the zone's white school-age children in the zone are enrolled in private and parochial schools (the highest of the three zones.)

Schools of Choice

Parents and students residing in the East Zone will be given a choice of twenty-two elementary schools and seven middle schools. The East Zone has only one citywide magnet school, the Martin Luther King Middle School. The elementary and middle schools located in the East Zone have the capacity to enroll at least 17,000 students under the new Controlled Choice plan. The elementary schools are: Clapp, Condon, Dever, Dickerman, Early Learning Center, Endicott, Everett, Fifield, S. Greenwood, Holland, Kenny, Lee, Marshall, Mather, Murphy, O'Hearn, Perkins, Perry, Russell, Stone, Taylor and Tynan. The middle schools are: Cleveland, Gavin, Holmes, King, McCormack, Thompson and Wilson.

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

East Zone Improvement Plan

The Student Assignment Plan currently in use includes both community district and citywide magnet schools. In the last twelve years, citywide magnet schools have received a disproportionate share of discretionary resources, specifically State 636 funds, resulting in the perception that these schools are superior schools. We have been told repeatedly by parents and educators that, in some cases, this perception is well-founded and, in others, that it is not.

Nonetheless, because none of the schools in the proposed East Zone has benefitted from these greater resources, educational equity demands that this situation be addressed so that the East Zone parents are not disenfranchised by where they live. The zone School Improvement and

Planning Council should be given the special responsibility for East Zone improvement, but in the interest of immediate equity, we propose the following:

1. Access to out-of-zone schools for a limited period of time. Specifically, we propose that, in addition to their share of the available seats at the two citywide schools, the Hernandez and Timilty Schools, East Zone parents be allowed to choose the Haley and Lewenberg schools.

2. Changes in leaadership. Our discussions with parents and educators in Boston substantiated what we knew from our experience elsewhere, namely, that the key to school change and improvement is leadership. We recommend that, as soon as the East Zone Superintendent is named, he or she discuss with the Superintendent of Schools leadership changes in several East Zone schools. Two to three educators in other zones who have demonstrated their capacity as effective school-building leaders should be invited to serve in the East Zone.

3. Reallocation of resources. Each year the Boston Public Schools receives six million dollars of State 636 funds. We recommend a reallocation of a substantial portion of those funds to East Zone improvements for 1989-90. In this manner, the smaller share received by East Zone schools in past years would be remedied.

4. Partnerships. The University of Massachsuetts at Boston has established a strong relationship with the current District C which includes most of the East Zone. That relationship should be expanded to include new initiatives with East Zone schools, including the establishment of a K-8 teacher training school in the East Zone. Further, Wheelock College, which has a demonstrated record in successful work with Boston Public School teachers, should be invited to collaborate in this effort.

5. After-school connections to East Zone schools. The Boston Community schools currently conduct after school programs in several East Zone schools. Discussions should begin with University of Massachusetts with regard to developing after school "Renaissance" programs in some of the East Zone schools. These programs will enable many East Zone students to remain in school until at least 6:00 P.M.

6. Kindergarten to grade eight schools. Parents have expressed a great interest in continuity of education program through eighth grade. Several of these schools should be developed, beginning in the East Zone. It is our experience that a "traditional" type school works well in a K-8 structure. Perhaps one such school could open in 1989-90 at the Dever and McCormack schools, where no facilities changes would be required. Alternatively, one may make a middle school a "traditional" school and relate it to several elementary schools.

7. Two-way bilingual and Multicultural programs. Requests for proposals from schools in the East Zone should go out from the zone School Improvement and Planning Council immediately after ratification at this plan for planning funds for the establishment of two-way bilingual and multicultural programs. With the assistance of the principal and staff at the Hernandez school, planning should take place during the 1989-90 school year; such programs could be implemented in the 1990-91 school year. The Multicultural school could embrace French and other languages.

A specific expenditure plan involving discretionary state and federal funding should be developed in support of the development and implementation of these East Zone school improvement initiatives. By targeting the allocation of such resources by zones, the cause of educational equity will be served. State and local education authorities must recognize that a disproportionate expenditure of resources in one zone rather than in another may be required in the service of educational equity.

North Zone

The North Zone presents a set of circumstances that requires the Boston Public School system to relate to it in a different way than to other zones. Schools in the other two zones should reflect the white, black and other minority student proportions of the total zone. They may vary from these proportions 10 percentage points. Also, up to 50 percent of the students nearest a school in two zones are offered a

nearest school preference if they wish to apply for it. The problems of transportation in the North Zone, including going to and from Charlestown, East Boston, Allston-Brighton and traversing the downtown business district necessitate guidelines that may limit the transporting of students more so than in other zones. Although schools in the North Zone must also reflect the zonewide white, black and other minority student proportions, these schools may vary from this ratio up to 15 percentage points. Also, the School Committee may consider allowing up to 75 percent of the students within the walk-zone of a school in the North Zone should be offered nearest school preference if they wish to apply for this option.

Studies in other communities have revealed that at least 20 percent of the student body in any school should be unlike the prevailing population for the purpose of achieving an effective Multicultural learning environment. Because of the uniqueness of the North Zone, our recommendation that schools located there should be permitted to vary from the zonewide proportions up to 15 percentage points could violate this principle in a school that is 70 percent white or 30 percent minority and should be implemented only as a special circumstance.

The definition of "special circumstance" is whether a different course of action might force a student to accept a school assignment outside one of the relatively geographically isolated communities of the North Zone.

While the North Zone presents special circumstances, none of the communities in this zone is eliminated from participation in the new Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan for several reasons. A review of current enrollment practices reveals that 900 minority students

voluntarily travel daily to East Boston from other sectors of the city. Moreover, some Vietnamese students who live in East Boston go outside the community daily to receive instruction in bilingual education programs in Allston-Brighton. Equity demands that East Boston students not be cut off from educational offerings in the North Zone that may be outside their community.

With nearest to home preference increased for North Zone students and a wider variation tolerated around the zonewide proportion of white, black and other minority students enrolled in specific schools, with the privilege of signing on a waiting list for schools of choice not received in the initial assignment process, and because some students will desire to go outside their residential communities to take advantage of new and improved educational offerings elsewhere, it is contraindicated to exclude East Boston or any other sector of the city from the benefits of this plan. Actually no individual in East Boston or elsewhere in the city is forced to receive an unacceptable assignment. All are granted the privilege of participating in a choice process that will accommodate most of their preferences.

West Zone

On the basis of our planning process, including the public hearings, there do not appear to be any educational equity issues in the West Zone that would require special zone-specific initiatives.

ZONE ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Zone Superintendents

Upon ratification of the new Controlled Choice plan, the superintendent should recommend the appointment of three Zone Superintendents. These individuals should be high level administrators who have demonstrated a capacity for educational leadership. Once appointed by the School Committee, these Zone Superintendents would be held responsible for the overall implementation of the new Student Assignment Plan within their respective zones. The scope of their duties would include:

1. Supervision of zone-based staff including administrators, principals, teachers, para-professionals, clerical staff and custodians;
2. Certification of instructional capacities;
3. Implementation of school improvement initiatives;
4. Coordination of school programs with universities, businesses, cultural institutions and other community organizations that are affiliated with the zone.
5. Administration of state, federal and other external funding resources;
6. Staff development and in-service training;
7. Supervision of zone Parent Information Centers.

Zone Superintendents would report directly to the Superintendent of Schools and should be members of the Superintendent's Administrative Cabinet.

Office Of The Zone Superintendent

Zone Superintendents should have a professional support staff that is capable of carrying out the duties and responsibilities of their office. Some of the positions that should be deployed to the office of the Zone Superintendent include: bilingual education specialists for

programs being offered within the zone, special education specialists, staff developers, school improvement and curriculum specialists and a transportation officer.

Parent Information and Student Assignment Centers

Upon ratification of the proposed Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan, the Superintendent of Schools should take immediate steps to establish Parent Information and Student Assignment Centers in each of the three zones. Each Parent Information Center should have a full-time director who will be responsible for the center's day to day operations. Ideally, this person should be the parent of a current or former Boston Public Schools' student and should reside within the zone in which he or she works. The centers should also have a staff of part-time parent coordinators and outreach workers who are reflective of the racial and linguistic diversity of a zone's resident student population. Every effort should be made to hire staff who are knowledgeable about the workings of the Boston Public Schools and who have or have had children enrolled in the Boston Public Schools.

The centers will have primary responsibility for ensuring that parents fully understand the rules and regulations of the new Student Assignment Plan and that all parents are able to make informed decisions about their schools and programs of choice. The centers will have particular responsibility for the preparation and dissemination of student registration and information packets, parental outreach and recruitment activities, coordination of school tours and parent visita-

tions, the conducting of zonewide school informational meetings and the initial processing of all student registration and school application forms.

Each center will have a Student Assignment Officer who will be solely responsible for processing all final assignment applications. This person will be deployed by the Department of Implementation and be administratively supervised by the Zone Superintendent. However, the Department of Implementation will retain oversight authority over all final student assignments. Other center staff also will be supervised by the Zone Superintendent.

Zone School Improvement and Planning Councils

A school system that is organized into several Student Attendance Zones is obligated, for the sake of equity, to offer an equivalent range and quality of educational opportunities in each zone. The administrative structure responsible for achieving zone equivalency is the zone School Improvement and Planning Council. Three councils should be appointed immediately after this plan is ratified to serve the three Student Attendance Zones.

A council should consist of not more than thirteen individuals who are diversified in their racial and ethnic origins. These individuals should be residents or be affiliated with businesses and/or zone-based organizations. Council members should be appointed by the School Committee and have a two-year, renewable term of office. Among the categories of individuals from whom Council members should be recruited are parents of Boston Public School students, local educators, business and other community representatives (such as those associated with the

plaintiff class, linguistic and special education advocacy groups and other educationally-oriented organizations). At least one-third of the members of the councils should be parents.

Councils should be lead by co-chairs, one of whom should be a parent and another an educator. Initially, co-chairs should be appointed by the School Committee and Superintendent of Schools for a two-year term of office but, thereafter, should be elected by the Council from its membership.

The Zone Superintendent should serve as executive secretary of the zone School Improvement and Planning Council and his or her office should provide staff support for the council's work.

The councils do not have the authority of the School Committee. Because they are creatures of the School Committee, they should serve as recommending agents regarding schoolwide policies and practices that affect a zone and should report directly to the School Committee and the Superintendent of Schools who, from time to time, may assign specific decision-making powers to the councils.

A council should fulfill its mission of monitoring the extent to which educational opportunities in its zone are equivalent to those in others by functioning in the following ways:

1. Identify successful school improvement initiatives elsewhere that should be part of the educational offerings of the zone;

2. Determine instructional space available and appropriate use of facilities for educational programs in consultation with Zone Superintendents and school building administrators in the zone;

3. Monitor implementation of the Unified Facilities Plan and recommend modifications for future implementation;

4. Review and approve individual school improvement plans and individual school profiles;

5. Dispense discretionary state and federal funding to programs within the zone which have been appropriated by the School Committee;

6. Monitor implementation of Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan and recommend modifications when appropriate;

7. Prepare for the School Committee and the Superintendent an annual report on the status of education in zone schools which should include recommendations for stabilizing and maintaining enhanced educational programs, developing new ones when necessary and phasing out those that are ineffective, and an operating budget for all zone schools and administrative services.

School-Based Initiatives

Commenting upon the reforms that the court recommended for desegregating school student bodies including overhauling the administrative structure of the school system and upgrading facilities of the Boston Public Schools, Robert Dentler, the court-appointed expert, said that the court did not deal squarely with effecting reforms in school practice. It could be that the court, not being an educational agency, could not deal effectively with such matters. Now that daily operation and supervision of the schools have been returned to local educational authorities, educational enhancement ideas should receive priority concern. The new Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan is one way of strengthening educational offerings and decentralizing administrative leadership so that more accountability for providing a good education can be built into the system.

Because Controlled Choice places a responsibility upon each school to make itself attractive to students, some educational planning is decentralized to the school building level. Principals, headmasters, teachers and parents are obligated to work together to fashion an educational strategy that will upgrade their schools. Each cycle of the

choice process is, in effect, a referendum on the schools within a zone. A school's standing in the annual rank-ordering of schools that students prefer should send a clear message to educators at the building level.

The school system should be slow to multiply magnet elementary and middle schools with initiatives largely from central administration. The goal of Controlled Choice is to shift to each school building the initiative for proposing innovations that will make a particular school special and attractive.

Staff Development and In-Service Training

In-service educational programs are essential in upgrading and maintaining instructional competence of faculty and staff. Each of the zone schools of choice should have the responsibility not only of demonstrating "ideal type" educational programs but also, each zone should provide an in-service educational academy to which exemplary teachers may be sent as preceptors from time to time and where seminars and conferences on effective teaching and school improvement strategies may be conducted.

AS WILL BE DISCUSSED IN SECTION IV OF THIS REPORT, A MAJOR ADVANTAGE OF CONTROLLED CHOICE IS THAT IT WILL ENABLE THE SYSTEM TO IMPLEMENT THE ABOVE ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES IN A COST EFFECTIVE AND TIMELY MANNER.

PROVISIONS FOR FACILITIES USE

Determination Of Instructional Capacities

Prior to the beginning of the school selection and assignment process, Zone Superintendents must certify instructional capacities for each elementary and middle school in their respective zones. An instructional capacity must be set for each school and for each grade-level within each school. The instructional capacity will represent a school's assignable capacity for the following school year.

The total assignable capacity for elementary and middle schools must be sufficient to accommodate all K - 8 students residing within each attendance zone including regular education, bilingual and special needs students. The determination of school-specific instructional capacities should be established in consultation with zone school-improvement and planning councils and school building principals.

Identification Of Available Instructional Space

After instructional or assignable capacities have been established for each elementary and middle school, the Zone Superintendent will certify all available instructional space by school and grade level (total instructional space - grandfathered or continuing students). This information will be disseminated to parents through the system's Parent Information Centers prior to and during the school selection process. The identification of available space will be carried out in collaboration with the zone Student Assignment Officer and school building principals.

Allocation Of Available Space At Grade Level

All available space will be initially allocated to white, black and other minority students as designated by the Court before the beginning of the school selection and assignment process. At a time certain, if all allocated seats have not been claimed by blacks or other minorities, the remaining seats may be reassigned to the minority group that has oversubscribed its allocated seats. The initial allocation of available instructional space should be based on the actual proportions of white, black and other minority students who eligible to enroll in the school. This procedure will ensure that each racial group will have genuine proportional access to all schools and programs of choice.

Although seats in schools initially are allocated for three racial and ethnic groups, all final assignments for Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans will be made in terms of a two-way definition of desegregation. This way, individuals in one minority group may occupy unused seats of other minority groups who do not prefer a specific school. This procedure will protect the rights of the plaintiff class to a desegregated education and will also work to increase the accommodation of first and second school choices for Black, Hispanic, Asian and Native American students, and, at the same time, minimize travel to and from schools.

This procedure will also enable more minority students to attend schools closer to their homes and will facilitate greater mainstreaming of bilingual and minority special education students into the school in which they have been receiving their special programmatic services.

THE DETERMINATION AND ALLOCATION OF ALL INSTRUCTIONAL SPACE AT GRADE-LEVEL MUST BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SYSTEMS PREVAILING STANDARDS GOVERNING OPTIMUM CLASS SIZES FOR REGULAR, BILINGUAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS.

SCHOOL SELECTION AND ASSIGNMENT PROCEDURES

Early And Timely Assignment Process

Under the proposed Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan, the school selection and assignment process would essentially operate on an early and continuous basis. The entire process would begin earlier in the school year and there would be separate starting dates for processing various kinds of assignments. Parents would be given more time to visit schools and make informed school choices and the systems will have more time to provide effective parent information services. This early assignment procedure will also make the entire student assignment process more manageable and will enable students to obtain their actual assignments long before they begin the next school year.

Kinds Of Assignments

As we understand the situation, the Boston Public Schools will make the following kinds of assignments under the proposed Controlled Choice Plan:

1. Newly enrolling K1 and K2 students;
2. K2 students rising into first grade
3. Fifth graders rising into sixth grade (elementary to middle school);
4. Eighth graders rising into ninth grade (middle to high school);
5. Voluntary transfers (intra-zone);
6. Out-of-zone changes of residence
7. Students clearing the waiting lists for first choice schools;

8. TBE students mainstreaming into regular classes;

9. Substantially separate SPED students mainstreaming into regular classes;

10. Newly-enrolling students grades 2 - 12.

All of the above students will be seeking a "new" school assignment and involve a distinct population of minority and white students. Therefore, the system should establish, when practicable, a separate timeline for processing each kind of assignment. This will enable the system to better manage the assignment process and will enable each Parent Information Center to better respond to the particular educational needs and circumstances of students and parents seeking a new school assignment.

Proposed Schedule Of Assignments

For purposes of administrative efficiency, parental convenience and to ensure a more effective parent information process, the system should develop a coherent schedule of assignments. The following are some suggestions as to how the above kinds of assignments may be operationalized under the Controlled Choice Plan.

Kindergarten

Assignments for newly enrolling kindergarten students should be made on a monthly basis starting in January and continuing through the opening of the new school year in September. This will enable the system to enroll new kindergarten students well in advance of non-public schools. We would also suggest that parents be allowed to visit schools in November and December, thereby giving parents ample time to visit schools and make informed decisions.

Each zone will offer full and half-day K2 classes. Some half-day K2 classes will continue to enroll students on a non-desegregative or exempt basis, but such neighborhood K2 assignments will not be considered permanent school assignments and students enrolled through this process will not be guaranteed a seat in the first grade at the school. Where practicable, such exempt kindergarten classes will be located in a way which minimizes the need for student transportation.

On the other hand, all full-day and some half-day K2 classes will be subject to the racial fairness provisions of the new Controlled Choice plan and will be considered permanent elementary school assignments. Parents enrolling their children into these K2 classes through the racial fairness provisions of the new plan will be provided yellow bus transportation where needed. These assignments will be considered permanent school assignments and all such K2 students will be allowed to remain in their assigned elementary school until they complete that school's highest grade.

This provision will increase the number of parents who can "lock" into an elementary school of choice at kindergarten. Parents who elect to enroll their children into desegregative K2 classes will be allowed to select their permanent school of assignment by their own rank order of preference. Sibling preference and closeness to school preference will be provided for such K2 assignments. Desegregative K2 classes may be located in all elementary schools, and the location and determination of instructional space for desegregative K2 classes will be given priority over non-desegregative K1 and K2 assignments.

Zone Superintendents should not be required to offer non-desegregative K2 classes in all elementary schools. Where feasible, non-desegregative K2 classes should be clustered into underutilized elementary schools. The Boston Public Schools will not be obligated to provide yellow bus transportation for students enrolling in non-desegregative K2 classes.

Any student enrolled in a non-desegregative K2 class will be considered a "new student" if and when they enroll in the Boston Public Schools, and, at that time, will be given a permanent assignment in accordance with the provisions of the new Controlled Choice plan. We further recommend that the School Committee and the Superintendent consider phasing out K1 classes in view of the increased demand for full-day kindergarten and more early childhood education programs.

Rising First, Sixth And Ninth Grade Students

Students entering first grade, sixth grade and ninth grade should also be able to obtain an assignment earlier in the year. Because most of these students will already be enrolled in the Boston Public Schools, parents could easily be given one or two months to visit their schools of choice.

The system should begin the school selection process at the end of the second marking period and the entire process could be completed by March first or sooner. This procedure will work to facilitate a school shopping period in which parents of K2 and fifth grade students would be able to visit their zone elementary and middle schools in a timely and orderly manner. The same process would also hold for eighth graders visiting and choosing high school.

Voluntary Transfers And Students Clearing The Waiting List

Students seeking to transfer into a different school should be allowed to do so only during specified periods. Experience suggests that no student be allowed to transfer after the second marking period. Also, students should be cleared from waiting lists only after the Parent Information Centers have had the opportunity to recruit students into undersubscribed schools. Experience further suggests that students could be moved from waiting lists prior to the opening of the new school year (in June and late August) as well as after the school year begins (September and October).

Newly Enrolling Students Grades 2 - 12

Out-of-district students who will be newly entering the system in grades 2 - 8 for the following school year should be assigned only after the system has accommodated students already enrolled in the system. However, every effort should be made to begin processing these new assignments by early March.

Mainstreaming SPED and TBE Students

Students who no longer require a substantially separate special needs placement and those students who are ready to transition out of their bilingual education program will be considered "new" students and will be given a permanent school assignment under the provisions of the Controlled Choice plan. Every effort should be made to accommodate these students in the schools in which they are currently assigned, if their parent so choose.

Changes of Residence

Students who change their permanent residence and remain within their original attendance zone will not be required to attend a different school. Students who change their permanent residence but move out of their original zone will be required to attend a school in their new zone under the provisions of the Controlled Choice Assignment plan. No student, however, who moves out of their attendance zone will be required to change schools during the school year.

Homeless Students

Parents of students who do not have a permanent residence and who have been declared "homeless" by a governmental or voluntary social service agency may enroll in schools in any of the three zones under the provisions of the Controlled Choice plan. Homeless students will be assured of stability of assignment irrespective of their temporary residence. When a homeless child acquires a permanent residence in the city, their parents will be required to select a permanent school of assignment under the provisions of the Controlled Choice plan.

THE ACCOMMODATION OF CHOICE

School Choices

All new school assignments should be initially processed through the appropriate Parent Information and Student Assignment Center. At the time of application, parents and students will be allowed to select as many schools as are available by their own rank-order of preference. While it is highly unlikely that parents will actually visit every school in the zone, parents should be encouraged to visit and select at least five elementary schools and four middle schools. These may be schools near their homes or other schools and programs that they are eligible to attend.

While every effort should be made to assign students to their first choice schools, no students will be guaranteed a first choice school, and all final assignment decisions should be made by the Student Assignment Unit in accordance with the following administrative and Racial Fairness provisions of the new Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan.

Oversubscription

In the event that more students apply for spaces initially allocated for white, black and other minority students, the protocol for assignments will be as follows:

1. Siblings. If the applicant already has a brother or sister enrolled in the school.

2. Closest To School. Applicants who live within the geographic walk-zone of the school may be enrolled before students who live outside of the walk-zone. For purposes of this plan, an elementary school walk-zone is defined as an area within one mile of the school and within one

and one-half miles of a middle school. No more than 50 percent of available instructional spaces should be initially filled by walk-zone applicants in the East and West Zones and no more than 75 percent in the North Zone. Students who do not live within a walk-zone should be allowed to exercise a walk-zone preference for the school nearest to their home.

3. Random Lottery. The remaining spaces should be filled by a random lottery of the applicants not yet assigned.

4. Waiting Lists. Students who are not assigned to their first and/or second choice schools should be placed on a waiting list for these schools of choice. Waiting lists must be maintained for white, black and other minority applicants. Waiting lists should be periodically cleared in accordance with the administrative and Racial Fairness Guidelines of the new Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan.

Undersubscription

All instructional space will be initially allocated in zone schools on the basis of the percentage of white, black and other minority students residing in the zone. This will ensure that each racial group identified in the court-ordered desegregation plan will be guaranteed genuine proportional access in each zone school.However, any seats initially allocated for black or other minority students in a school that are not claimed by a time certain as specified in the new plan will be redistributed to the minority group students who have actually applied to the school.

In the event that fewer students apply for space initially allocated for white, black and/or other minority students, the Student Assignment Unit should be permitted to fill these available instructional spaces in accordance with the plan's Racial Fairness Guidelines:

North Zone may vary + or - 15 percentage points from the zonewide percentages for white and combined minority students;

West Zone and East Zone schools may vary + or - 10 percentage points from the zonewide percentages for white and combined minority students;

Citywide magnet schools may vary + or - 10 percentage points from the citywide percentages of white and combined minority students.

The following procedures will be used for filling underutilized school space:

1. Clearing Waiting Lists. Undersubscribed spaces initially allocated for white, black and other minority students may be filled by students on a waiting list for their first and second school choices within the limits established by the plan's Racial Fairness Guidelines;

2. Mandatory Assignments. Students who cannot be assigned to an explicit school of choice may be given a fixed assignment to a school near their homes in accordance with the plan's Racial Fairness Guidelines. In light of the unique transportation circumstances in the North Zone, the School Committee should consider prohibiting fixed assignments either into and out of East Boston and other impacted areas in the North Zone;

3. Voluntary Transfers. Undersubscribed spaces may be filled by students requesting a voluntary transfer out of their assigned schools. Voluntary transfers will only be permitted during the first and second marking periods and must conform to the plan's Racial Fairness Guidelines;

4. Hardship Appeals. Parents who are dissatisfied with their child's assignment may file an appeal under the provisions of a hardship appeals procedure. Students who prevail in their appeal may be assigned to undersubscribed schools in accordance with the plan's Racial Fairness Guidelines;

Underutilized Schools and School Improvement

Schools that have excess instructional space and otherwise are having difficulty in attracting and retaining students as indicated by low parental and student applications and schools that have disproportionate fixed assignments and/or disproportionate requests for transfers into other schools from students enrolled in the school should be targeted for immediate technical assistance and special school improvement initiatives.

Year One Requirements

The question of how to make underutilized schools more attractive will initially be the responsibility of the principal or headmaster, teachers and School Improvement Council. Possible intervention after one year of undersubscription may include:

1. The Parent Information Center would conduct a survey of parents and students who are requesting a transfer in order to identify their reasons for wanting to leave the school. Also, the Parent Information Center would attempt to ascertain the reasons for parents not initially selecting the school.

2. The Parent Information Center would share the results of their inquiry with school officials and develop a specific parental outreach and recruitment plan for the underutilized school. Concurrently, the school would re-evaluate its educational program and make specific changes if necessary to make the school more attractive.

Year Two Requirements

If a school continues to be undersubscribed after the second year of implementation, the school should come under the scrutiny of the Zone Superintendent. Possible interventions may include:

1. The zone school improvement specialists would conduct an assessment of the school's educational attractiveness using such criteria as school facility, teaching and learning environment, curriculum, special program offerings, parental involvement activities, external resources and other factors that may be making the school unattractive;

2. On the basis of the above study, the Zone Superintendent may make specific school improvement recommendations to be implemented by the principal or headmaster. The Zone Superintendent and zone planning council may also allocate specific resources and support staff to facilitate the implementation of this school improvement plan;

3. The Zone Superintendent should also conduct a review of the school's educational leadership and make appropriate recommendations for possible changes to the Superintendent of Schools.

Year Three Requirements

After three years, if a school is still undersubscribed, the Zone Superintendent and zone School Improvement and Planning Council may take whatever measurements necessary to make the school more attractive including changing the schools educational leader and major restructuring of the school's educational mission. The measures may also involve the consolidation or closure of the underutilized school.

III. EDUCATIONAL ENHANCEMENTS

Educational equity is an essential test of the adequacy of the Student Attendance Zones. If the school facilities and programs are not equivalent in each zone, the principle of equity requires that immediate steps be undertaken to achieve parity or that cross-zone access be offered for unique programs that are not available in each zone.

Full Day K2 Classes And First-Grade In Same School

Kindergarten is an entry point in the public schools of Boston and is an appropriate program for reform that will upgrade the educational offerings in each attendance zone and within the total system.

Under the federal court order, kindergarten was exempted from the requirement to operate as a desegregated learning environment largely because compulsory student attendance law does not apply to kindergarten-age children. Although the nearest-school policy of student assignment was disallowed by the court as inadequate for the purpose of achieving school desegregation, the court permitted a nearest-school assignment policy for kindergarten enrollment; this was permitted because kindergarten was not included in the systemwide school desegregation order.

Despite the fact that approximately one-sixth of all pupils in the Boston Public Schools are enrolled at the kindergarten level, the system continues to operate as it did under the federal court order as if most of these students should be exempted from the student assignment policy. This practice is inadvisable if Boston wishes to attract to its elementary schools students who use its kindergartens.

By excluding kindergarten students from the comprehensive citywide student assignment policy, there is no guarantee of continuity of education in the same school in which kindergarten is experienced. Some parents enroll their young children in public school kindergarten, but withdraw them from the public school system when they reach the first grade since students are not guaranteed a seat in upper grades in the same school. Many of these parents informed us that they would continue to send their children to the public school if they could remain in the same school in which they attended kindergarten for first grade and all elementary school years.

Kindergarten and First-Grade Enrollment
by Race in Boston Public Schools, 1988

Race	Kindergarten II		First Grade	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Black	1909	42%	2559	50%
White	1500	33%	1043	21%
Hispanic	816	18%	1047	21%
Asian	322	7%	381	8%
American Indian	22		10	*
	4569	100%	5040	100%

*Less than 1 percent

One of every three white students who uses the Boston Public Schools for kindergarten education withdraws from this school system at first grade. We know that the absence of a nearest-school enrollment policy for elementary school grades may be one -- but is not the only reason -- some students tend to withdraw from the public schools, since private and independent schools of matriculation may not be located in the neighborhood of some families that use them. Even in the public schools, nearly 30 percent of the children in Kindergarten II are in Extended Day Programs; these Extended Day Programs may not be located in nearest-home schools.

Based on this analysis, we believe that the opportunity to experience stability and continuity in education in a school of choice from kindergarten through all elementary grades is more important for most parents than is a nearest-school student assignment policy for kindergarten children that does not guarantee them elementary-grade seats in the same school. Moreover, we believe that guaranteeing continuity in education from kindergarten through grade-school years within the context of a Controlled Choice student assignment policy would encourage more parents to enroll their children in the Boston Public Schools.

To implement a new student assignment policy that guarantees continuity of education for kindergarten students in Boston Public Schools and to insure that space is available in each school, one option is that all K2 students be accommodated in their schools of choice in full day kindergartens.

This new policy option of offering all children full day K2 programs would require the Boston Public Schools to serve approximately 4569 five-year old students a full school day rather than a one-half school

day. There is reason to believe that a full day kindergarten session for five-year old children only would increase enrollment stability. While 7,936 children registered for Kindergarten 1 and 2 in 1988, only 6149 attend school regularly; up to 900 were missing.

This option builds upon past experience. Robert Dentler, who has served many years as a court-appointed expert in the Boston school desegregation case, stated in a book entitled School Desegregation Plans That Work (1984) which was edited by one of the consultants that, "Kindergarten should have been included ... [in] the scope of the plan." "Hindsight," he said, "suggests [that leaving kindergarten outside the scope of the plan] was a serious mistake, for it not only left many kindergartens racially segregated; it also created a disjuncture in student assignments between grades K and 1 which prepared kindergartners for life in one school and then assigned them to another school a year later" (p. 64).

An alternative approach is to keep some Kindergarten 1 and 2 as they are as half-day, exempt assignments for all four-year olds and for some five-year olds whose parents want a half-day only. However, more students should be guaranteed continuity of enrollment in a school of choice by enrolling in a full day or half-day kindergarten under the provisions of the Controlled Choice plan.

This is a set of recommendations for the first two years of implementation. They are offered as alternative recommendations because of the complexity of the current kindergarten arrangement and as an attempt to respond to parents who want to have a permanent school of enrollment

for their children at kindergarten level. We also were aware of cost factors. At the end of a two-year period, the Boston Public Schools may wish to re-evaluate the kindergarten policy that it has chosen.

Early Learning Programs

Effective early childhood programs offer a wonderful learning opportunity for pre-school children. Such programs match instructional strategies to the developmental needs of children. Beyond the benefit of providing quality extended daycare, early childhood programs improve the quality of living for children by reducing early educational deficits through group and individualized instruction. They also assist in cultivating and enhancing the development of interpersonal intelligence among children. Such programs obviously are places where learning disabilities can be detected early so that corrective measures may be undertaken. Early intervention is a well-accepted approach in preventing chronic disability.

We propose that at least two early learning programs should be located in each of the three attendance zones. Thus, the Boston Public Schools initially would have six early learning programs. They will be important educational enhancement features of the new Student Assignment Plan and should aid in attracting Boston children to the public schools. Although costly, evidence suggests that such programs are educationally effective and worthy of replication. Policymakers in Boston may wish to examine alternative models of early childhood education such as program in the Community Schools, Early Learning Centers, and models such as the collaborative project between the Washington-Beech Community Daycare Center and the Bates Elementary School in Roslindale. Some of the

advisers we have listed could help the community to do this. Such models have been successfully introduced into several urban school systems including Buffalo, New York. These alternative models may provide more cost-effective option for early childhood education. In any event, early learning programs should be expanded in Boston and could accommodate some of the children presently enrolled in Kindergarten 1 if these are not continued.

Two-Way Bilingual Or Multicultural Schools

The bilingual student population has increased in Boston Public Schools from 2,200 in 1975 to 7,000 in 1982 to 8,400 in 1988. The 1988 bilingual population is 15 percent of all Boston Public School students.

Bilingual education, in general, is a transitional program for students for whom English is not their first language. Over the years, however, the Hernandez School has led the way in teaching the Spanish language as something of value beyond its utility as a means of communication.

Scholars, who recognize the growing linguistic diversity in urban areas of the United States, understand language as an important form of ethnic identity. There are parents today who have the opportunity to rear their children speaking two languages, but are discouraged or dissuaded from doing so, either because they are not sure how to go about it or because of the often conflicting advice they receive from relatives, friends and teachers. What some educators do not recognize is that multilingualism can contribute to cross-cultural adaptations.

The Hernandez School understood this principle early on. It recognized the study of language as a Multicultural matter and tailored its

IV. PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Year One Implementation

In light of the administrative and educational changes that will result from the ratification of the proposed Controlled Choice plan, we recommend that the plan be implemented over a two year period. The following proposed implementation schedule is based on the assumption that the plan will be ratified during the 1988-89 school year.

Student Assignments

In order to ensure a smooth and orderly transition from the court-ordered student assignment plan into the new Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan, the system must be sensitive to the needs and circumstances of students currently enrolled in the Boston Public Schools. The following "special provisions" have been designed to respond to the educational concerns of those students who will be enrolled in the Boston Public Schools during the first year of implementation:

Grandfathering

The following proposed grandfathering privilege should be the first priority of assignment during the first year of implementation and should be subject to the following pre-conditions:

1. All Boston Public School students enrolled in desegregative K2 classes (K2 students enrolled in citywide magnet schools, extended day classes and in their geocoded schools); in elementary schools grades 1, 2, 3 and 4; in middle schools grades 6 and 7; and high schools grades 9, 10, 11 should be allowed to remain in their currently assigned school, irrespective of their home-residence.

UNLESS SPECIFIED IN THE PLAN, ALL STUDENTS ARE TO BE GRANDFATHERED INTO THEIR CURRENTLY ASSIGNED SCHOOL SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN IN THAT ASSIGNED SCHOOL AND SHOULD CONTINUE TO RECEIVE ALL NECESSARY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, INCLUDING TRANSPORTATION, UNTIL THEY COMPLETE THAT SCHOOL'S HIGHEST GRADE;

2. For those students who remain in a school outside of their new residential attendance zone, the grandfathering privilege should not be extended to their siblings unless they are already enrolled in the same school. All out-of-zone students who elect to transfer into a new school in their new zone should be accorded sibling preference for enrolling in the same zone-school in which a brother or sister is already enrolled. Transportation for out-of-zone students should be provided for a minimum of at least two years.

3. Schools that are to be replicated such as the Hernandez and Timility and Early Learning Centers should be allowed to enroll students on an inter-zone basis until these schools are operational in the other zones. Students who enroll in these citywide schools should be provided free transportation until they complete the school's highest grade or until a similar school is replicated in their respective residential attendance zone. These students should be given an enrollment preference for transferring into the replicated school in their zone;

4. Students enrolled in Transitional Bilingual Education programs outside of their new residential attendance zones should be allowed to remain in out-of-zone schools until they are mainstreamed into regular education classes. Free transportation for out-of-zone TBE students should be provided while they are enrolled in the bilingual program. When out-of-zone TBE students are ready to be mainstreamed they may be given a one time only option of remaining in their currently assigned school for regular education or they may opt to be enrolled into a different school within their new residential attendance zone under the provisions of the new Student Assignment Plan. Free transportation for mainstreamed out-of-zone bilingual students should be provided on the same basis as for regular education out-of-zone students;

5. Students, attending a school outside of their zone and who do not want to be grandfathered into that school, should be allowed to choose a new school within their residential attendance zone under the provisions of the new Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan.

Non-Grandfathered Students

1. All K2 students who have not been assigned under the desegregation requirements of the current court ordered plan will not be grandfathered and should be given a permanent elementary school assignment in accordance with the provisions of the new Controlled Choice plan effective for the 1989-90 school year;

2. All fifth grade students currently enrolled in the Boston Public Schools should be allowed to select their middle schools of choice under the provisions of the new Controlled Choice Assignment Plan effective for the 1989-90 school year;

3. All eighth grade students currently enrolled in the Boston Public Schools should be assigned to high school under the provisions of the Controlled Choice Assignment Plan effective for the 1989-90 school year;

4. Parents who do not want their children grandfathered into their currently assigned zone schools may be given a new school assignment in accordance with the current court-ordered assignment plan, effective for the 1989-90 school year.

New Students

1. All students newly entering the Boston Public Schools in grades K1 through 8 should be enrolled under the provisions of the new Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan;

2. All newly entering students should not be assigned until the system has assigned all students currently enrolled in the system, effective for the 1989-90 school year.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Decentralization

A major advantage of the Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan is that it allows a school system to use existing resources in a more effective way. The decentralized administrative structure of the plan can be implemented in a cost effective way by the Superintendent of

Schools redeploying existing administrative and clerical staff into the Offices of the Zone Superintendents. As noted in the plan, such staff includes specialists in the areas of bilingual education, special education, curriculum development, in-service training and student transportation.

We further understand that the system currently operates several Parent Information Centers with experienced parent workers and that the Department of Implementation, under the Boston School Department, has well trained, experienced and professional staff in the area of student assignments. These professionals can be redeployed to serve in new zone Parent Information and Student Assignment Centers. However, the full implementation of the plan will require a reorganization and augmentation of the staff of these centers.

The zone School Improvement and Planning Councils are an essential component of the plan and can be implemented in a cost effective way. Because the Zone Superintendents serve as executive secretaries to the councils, all professional and clerical support can be provided by the office of the Zone Superintendents for the work of these councils. Additional support for the operation of effective Parent Information Centers can be obtained from existing court-ordered parent councils and other parent advocacy groups and community organizations in the city. We also urge the Mayor and the School Committee to seek supplemental support funds from the State Department of Education and the business community for this effort.

Educational Equity

The proposed plan requires that each of the three zones become educationally equivalent. The plan recommends a variety of ways in which educational equity can be achieved in the Boston Public Schools and particularly within the East Zone. Many of the equity elements of the plan can be implemented with existing resources. These include: redeployment of several successful principals to East Zone schools; evaluation and possible changes in the educational leadership of some East Zone schools; and increased access to some out-of-zone schools that have been, historically, popular with East Zone parents and students. The plan also moves several effective schools into the East Zone. These measures should not require any additional funding.

However, we also recognize that funds must be made available for the development and implementation of some of the plan's school improvement initiatives. For example, the plan calls for the expansion of Two-way Bilingual Education programs, more full day kindergartens and increased extended day learning opportunities. The plan also calls for the development of alterntaive models of early childhood education and the creation of several, distinctive educational options such as traditional and laboratory schools. The successful initiation of these programs may well require funding for planning, staff development and other startup activities. If these initiatives cannot be, initially, funded from existing resources, we urge the Mayor and School Committee to seek support from state and federal educational authorities.

External Advisors

The plan suggests that the system obtain assistance from educators and practitioners from other school systems who have successfully implemented many of the reforms contained in our report. These individuals will be helpful in ensuring the effective implementation of the plan. We recommend that the Superintendent request support for this effort from the Network I which is a federally funded Title IV CRA Desegregation Assistance Center in Andover, Massachusetts.

We also recommend that continued external planning assistance, in particular for the high schools, be provided jointly by the Mayor, School Committee and business community.

Capital Improvements

Adoption of a new Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plan also makes it possible to address the issue of facilities consolidation in a comprehensive way. The City of Boston has allocated $148 million for capital improvements to school facilities, the first long range capital improvement plan after twenty-three years of neglect. We have met, twice, with the joint planners of the Unified Facilities Plan (the State Board of Education, the City of Boston and the Boston School Committee) and they have offered to prepare a list of school buildings that are most in need of significant expenditures in the coming years. We will forward that list to you when it is prepared so that it can be included in your deliberations. Any additional allocations for capital improvements should take into consideration a comprehensive plan for consolidating underutilized facilities. No further allocation should be made to capital expenditures without a comprehensive consolidation plan.

Timetable

Prior to the ratification of the proposed plan, the consultants are prepared to consult with the Superintendent of Schools on the development of a detailed timetable for Year One Implementation of the plan.

APPENDIX A: Boston Education Plan: Student Assignment Process

APPENDIX A: Boston Education Plan: Student Assignment Process

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

1. **Boston's student assignment process is complex and lacks predictability; this works against parents who cannot devote considerable time and energy to understanding the system.**

When parents new to the BPS first hear about geocodes, permissible racial percentages, examination/magnet/district schools, sibling preference, and the myriad rules and procedures of the assignment process, many are boggled and confused. While there may have been good reason for establishing each aspect of the desegregation plan over the years, the overall structure that has resulted seems to many like a Rube Goldberg machine.

An important way in which the assignment process is complex is the number of potential transitions faced by students as they move through the grades. Parents who enroll their children in the Boston schools do not have a clear, predictable sense of the schools their children will be attending from Kindergarten to high school graduation. The basic structure for most students is K-5 elementary schools, 6-8 middle schools, and 9-12 high schools. But other program choices result in additional transitions. Below is a list of all the points in the K-12 progression at which students might change schools:

- First grade (different school from Kindergarten to take advantage of Extended Day)
- Fourth grade (to enroll in Advanced Work Class)
- Sixth grade (transition to middle school)
- Seventh grade (to enroll in Boston Latin, Latin Academy, or Umana)
- Ninth grade (high school transition)
- Any other grade (if a transfer application or application to a magnet program is accepted)

In addition to these transitions, students in non-magnet schools must also change schools if they move their residence to a different assignment geocode.

The instability is especially acute in the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades for AWC students who get into the Latin Schools or Umana; they must attend three different schools in three years.

The frequent movement of students from school to school (combined with staff transfers) undermines continuity in teaching and monitoring students' progress. It also undercuts effective parent participation since parents are reluctant to commit themselves to a school that their child might be leaving soon. This complexity and unpredictability, along with late notification of assignment decisions, discourages some parents from

enrolling their children in the BPS or continuing to use the public schools as their children reach the key transition points.

The complexity of the student assignment process raises an equity problem. Students whose parents are highly assertive, have the time to research the system, or have inside information on the schools and the workings of DI are more likely to get their choices. Students whose parents are less tenacious, less able to spend time, and less knowledgeable about the system are less likely to get their choices. Many in this latter group are limited to their geocoded schools and have fewer educational options.

2. **Racial guidelines raise concerns about the fairness of the assignment process and limit access to some schools and programs.**

As parents work with the student assignment process, they learn that there are strict racial percentages in many schools and programs - so strict that they will not allow one more white or black student to enroll or leave if the critical percentage has been reached. Such guidelines have limited access to several popular schools and programs, notably Madison Park High School, certain Humphrey Center programs, Extended Day kindergartens, and Advanced Work Classes. Requests for transfers from school to school (or from one Humphrey Center program to another) are another area in which parent wishes can run up against the racial guidelines. Transfer requests are often denied because the tranfer would throw the sending or receiving school out of compliance.

Strict racial guidelines, an obvious necessity in a system undergoing desegregation, would be easier for parents to accept if they were consistent across the system and always resulted in numerically desegregated programs. In fact, a wide range of permissable racial percentages is used to assign students across the city: from 50 to 90 percent minority in district schools, from 20 to 80 percent minority in magnet elementary schools, 35 percent black and Hispanic at Boston Latin School, and almost 0 percent black (18 percent Hispanic) in East Boston. These variations raise the issue of fairness for parents denied access to a particular program because of the guidelines, and makes some parents critical of what seems like excessive concern with numerical compliance with desegregation orders.

There are also situations where the guidelines seem to work against the overall goals of the desegregation process. A school in District 1 (Allston-Brighton) with seemingly ideal racial percentages (35 percent black, 35 percent white, 30 percent other minority) can be out of compliance because of the target percentages predicated by the district's population. In predominantly-white East Boston, the addition of a few black students (which would seem highly desirable) can throw a school out of compliance.

Most difficult for many parents to accept is the fact that the elaborate racial balancing of schools does not in most cases produce an integrated learning environment for students. This is a reflection of the changed racial composition of the system as well as the assignment process itself. As difficult as being bused to a distant school may be for many parents in terms of convenience, safety, and neighborhood cohesion, it would at least seem logical if it resulted in students attending desegregated schools at the end of the bus ride. But this is not the case. There are so few white students in grades 1-12 outside East Boston and the Latin Schools that most

students step off the bus at a school that is similar in racial composition to the school down the street. The assignment process moves black, white, and other minority students around the system, but because of the overall composition of the student population and the population shifts within geocodes (discussed below), it cannot produce meaningful gains in desegregation.

3. **The assignment process has significant operational problems around the timing of assignments, the materials describing assignments, the treatment of parents, and the assignment geocodes.**

Much parent dissatisfaction with the student assignment process stems from the two problems identified above - complexity and strict racial guidelines. These are problems that are built into the current student assignment process and can only be changed by restructuring the process. But another set of parent complaints have to do with the way the current process is run. These are problems that are subject to change without restructuring the assignment process.

The first operational problem is the time of year when BPS notifies parents of student assignments. The fact that assignments are not mailed out until late May or early June puts the BPS at a serious disadvantage when competing with non-public schools. The late notification comes well after parents have to make commitments to private and parochial schools, and results in many parents choosing to leave the system rather than run the risk of not getting into the school of their choice within the BPS.

The timing causes other problems: parents receive assignment booklets so late that they have little time to visit and get information on schools to make thoughtful choices; schools with vacant seats have little or no time to recruit; teachers and building administrators have less time to schedule and prepare for incoming students; parents are notified late of transportation arrangements and there is less time to work out errors; it is harder to create waiting lists for oversubscribed programs; and transfers are put off until January of the next year, at which point few students are interested in changing schools.

The student assignment process is delayed by a host of understandable factors - school closing decisions, entrance examinations, printing timetables, etc. - but parents feel the timetable was not set up with its users in mind. An earlier timetable would be possible if it were made an administrative priority that drove all decisions, including school closings.

A second major operational problem is the assignment booklet sent to parents each year. Parents testified that the material does not arrive early enough, does not provide enough information on school programs and magnet themes, does not clarify the geocodes and the overall assignment process, is overly cumbersome (as in the case of separate application forms for high schools and the Humphrey Center), and is at times poorly-written, misleading, and inaccurate.

A third related problem, according to parents, is that the system is not providing reliable, independent, and easily-accessible information on the quality of school programs on which parents can base their choices. As a result, parents rely on word of mouth to form their impressions of schools;

few have visited the schools their children might attend, and most are poorly informed about schools.

A fourth operational problem is the slowness with which certain key decisions are made, for example: (a) when a new-to-the-system student is registered, there is a ten-day wait before the student can get bus transportation; (b) requests for school-to-school and program-to-program transfers take months to be acted on since the racial percentages of sending and receiving schools must be carefully checked.

A fifth problem is that vacant seats in oversubscribed programs are not filled promptly, and waiting lists are not established when parents first apply. This is an area in which DI was given the flexibility by the court orders to change current procedures.

Sixth, there are a number of areas where those who use the system feel that they could be served more quickly and efficiently. Enrollment projections are sometimes inaccurate, making it difficult for school administrators to plan effectively; schools are not notified of students assigned to them in a timely fashion; students arrive at assigned schools with incomplete information; the appeals process is cumbersome and not well known to parents; parents have to fill out a completely new application form each time a child is not admitted to a program; the policy of automatically promoting all students each summer, only to shift back those who are retained in the fall (necessitated by the fact that assignments must be made before final decisions on promotion are made in June), is confusing and cruel; and bilingual parents report frustration at finding only one staff person speaking Spanish at DI, having to wait in a long line to get information, and receiving English-only assignment papers that they cannot understand.

Seventh, there are persistent reports to parent monitoring groups of misinformation and impolite treatment of parents over the phone and in person by DI and other BPS personnel dealing with assignments. Parents report "being given the runaround" and getting inaccurate information when they call or appear in person.

Finally, the assignment geocodes have not been adapted to the significant shifts in Boston's population since 1975. The result is a geocode plan that does not reflect the current racial make-up of Boston, and results in minority students living in formerly white neighborhoods being bused into minority schools for desegregation purposes. Judge Garrity's orders have always allowed the BPS to change geocodes to adjust for changes in the racial composition of neighborhoods. But adjusting assignment geocodes to new racial patterns would have required reassigning students and creating further instability in a system that already had too much. Unfortunately, the only way the system can adjust to change is by destabilizing itself.

4. Many parents have their hopes raised by the choices in the assignment process, are disappointed when they do not get into magnet schools, and are frustrated that there are no other options.

Most American parents do not have much real choice in the school their children attend. Children go to the neighborhood public school, and few parents object to the lack of choice. Under court-ordered desegregation, the neighborhood school is no longer an option, and choice is suddenly an

emotional issue. Parents in desegregated systems, sensitive to the "choice" that has been taken away from them, are much more attuned to the choices they are given - including that of enrolling their children in non-public schools. Schools in a desegregated system, deprived of the lulling advantages of familiarity, proximity, and convenience, are scrutinized much more closely for their safety, climate, and instructional effectiveness. Properly harnessed, the increased concern about choice and educational quality can be powerful engines for school improvement.

From the beginning of Phase II in 1975, Boston's desegregation plan tried to introduce significant parent choice. Judge Garrity established magnet schools, each with a special "theme," to improve the quality of those schools and introduce an element of voluntarism into court-ordered desegregation. But the strategy of creating relatively few magnet schools and pitting them against district schools, coupled with the slowness of the rest of the system to respond to the imperative of school improvement, has had unfortunate consequences.

Judge Garrity foresaw the possibility that the magnet schools might become an elite district, and he ordered: "Community District schools shall be equal in quality and status in all respects to Citywide schools and programs." But the magnet schools are widely regarded as better than, not just different from, the district schools; many parents who do not get into magnet schools feel their children are getting an inferior education. The fact that the test scores of non-exam magnet schools students are not substantially different from those of non-magnet students does not dispel this aura of superiority; neither does the fact that only three of the magnet elementary and middle schools - Trotter, Ohrenberger, and Haley - turn away a substantial number of students; nor does the fact that a number of district schools outperform and outshine some of the magnet schools.

There are three reasons for the persistence of perceived superiority. First is the appeal of any institution that can be chosen and to which admission is limited; there is a definite selective aura to the magnet schools, and they have attracted many of the more assertive and middle class parents of all races. Second, magnet schools are the only option for parents who are dissatisfied with their district schools. And third, magnet schools have for the last decade received a disproportionate amount of state 636 funding, and elementary and middle magnet schools have been assigned individual (versus district-wide) university pairings.

Back to the issue of choice. Every spring, the BPS student assignment process gives parents a veritable smorgasbord of options: they can sign up for three schools, choosing from their geocoded district school and as many of the citywide magnet schools as they like (ten at the elementary level, four at the middle school level, and eight at the high school level). In District B, parents have five choices under an experiment involving additional "guaranteed" and "non-guaranteed" choices within the district.

The problem is that there are virtually no vacant seats in magnet schools (except at the entry level). Except in District B, this reduces the seemingly broad array of choices to one: the geocoded district school. Except in District B, other tempting district schools are simply unavailable. If the geocoded school to which the child is assigned is regarded as educationally inferior, parents are deeply disappointed by the process. Their expectations are raised by a range of choice quite unusual in a public school system, only be be dashed by what they see as the

shortage of high-quality seats. The rallying-cry of "choice" is a proxy for being able to enroll one's child in a good school within the strictures of a desegregated student assignment process. Underneath, choice is about parent control and empowerment.

Another policy restricting choice is that parents who enroll children in the BPS in mid-stream (for example, in 5th grade or 10th grade) cannot enter them in Advanced Work Class programs or the Latin Schools. In addition, there are vacant seats and willing applicants in a number of programs, and the vacancies are not usually filled because to do so would throw the school out of compliance. This also frustrates parent choice.

As much as possible, parents want to match their children's needs with a school program. But the restricted choices available in the current assignment process means that this is rarely possible. Of course not all parents agree on what a "good" school is, but there is little flexibility in the system to accommodate different educational tastes. A school that is highly regarded by some parents may not be available to them, while the same school may be poorly regarded by other parents whose children are involuntarily assigned there. In addition, there is little outreach by the system on parents' wishes: parents are not asked about the types of programs they would like to see in the public schools, nor are they given a formal opportunity to evaluate existing programs, so they do not feel that the system of very limited choices is geared to their needs and desires.

Many parents who do not get their first choices feel frustrated and, if they have the means or the opportunity, they are likely to enroll their children in parochial, private, and suburban (Metco) schools. The lack of meaningful parent choice deprives the system of what some consider an important engine of school improvement.

5. The assignment process puts the responsibility for desegregation on the central office; there are few incentives for principals and headmasters to desegregate their schools.

The current plan centralizes the entire responsibility for desegregation on the assignment process, and encourages all parties to pass responsibility (and blame when things go wrong) to DI. There is no pressure on most principals and headmasters to work for a desegregated student body. The prevalent attitude among school administrators is "DI sends us the students and we do the best job we can with the students we are assigned". The assignment process does little to encourage principals and headmasters to attract students to their schools. In fact, the increased enrollment brought about by some successful recruitment efforts have not been matched with increased resources. The larger class sizes that resulted were a definite disincentive to continued recruiting.

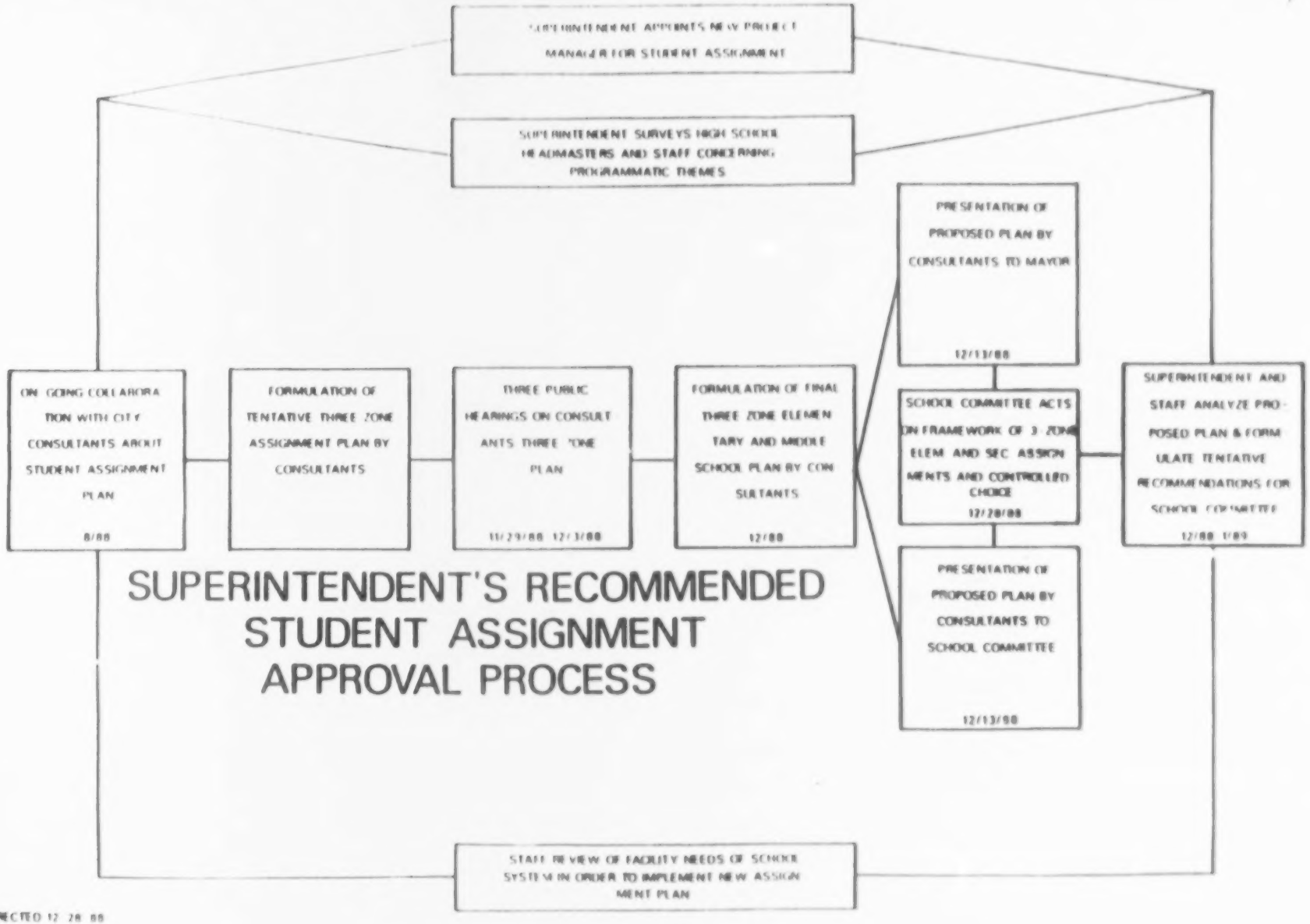
Postscript to the Problem Statement

Underlying parent complaints about complexity, uncertainty, lateness, unfairness, and choice is the issue of school quality; too many Boston schools are regarded as instructionally ineffective.

Few parents would complain about being assigned to their geocoded district school if they were sure it would give their children an excellent education. Nor would parents be trying to move their children at each transition point if they were satisfied with their district schools or could gain access to other programs they considered appropriate. Nor would being notified in late spring be as much of a problem if parents were sure of getting into a program they regarded as comparable to the non-public school alternatives.

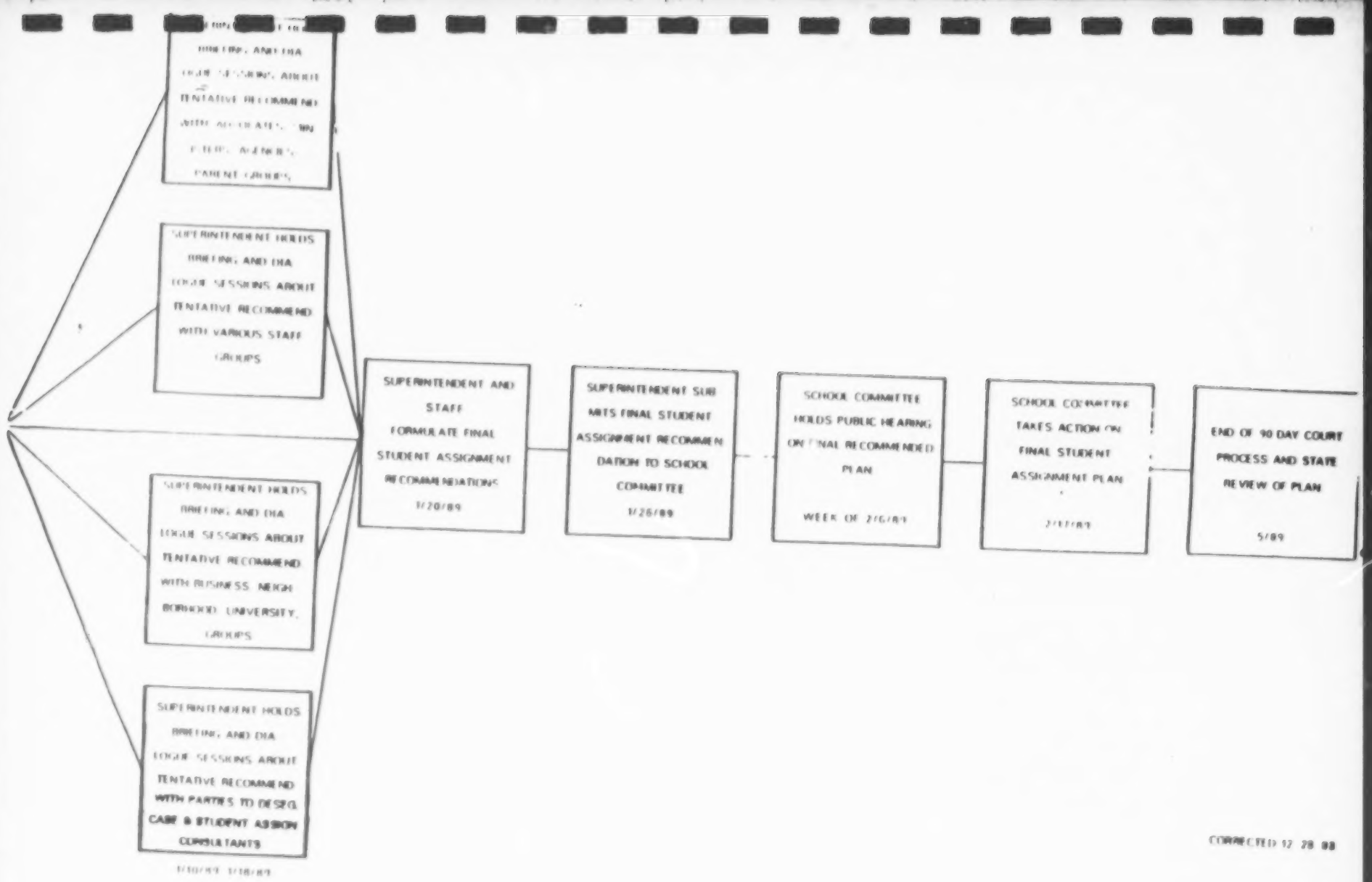
Clearly school quality, which is not under the direct control of the student assignment process, is a very important part of parent discontent with the current system. If all Boston schools were regarded as first-rate, there would be fewer complaints about the student assignment process. The paucity of highly-regarded schools (magnet or district) to which parents can gain access is what produces so many disappointed people. It has resulted in the loss of thousands of students, white and non-white, from the BPS.

The way the current student assignment process is designed, it will work effectively only if all schools are of equally high quality. But it is not formally the role of the Federal court and the student assignment process to improve schools. The desegregation process may forcefully raise issues of school quality, but it lacks the resources to fully address those issues. Another set of interventions, in conjunction with changes in the assignment process, is required to bridge the quality gap. That set of interventions is the responsibility of the School Committee and school department.


SUPERINTENDENT APPOINTS NEW PROJECT MANAGER FOR STUDENT ASSIGNMENT
SUPERINTENDENT SURVEYS HIGH SCHOOL HEADMASTERS AND STAFF CONCERNING PROGRAMMATIC THEMES
ON GOING COLLABORATION WITH CITY CONSULTANTS ABOUT STUDENT ASSIGNMENT PLAN
8/88
FORMULATION OF TENTATIVE THREE ZONE ASSIGNMENT PLAN BY CONSULTANTS
THREE PUBLIC HEARINGS ON CONSULTANTS THREE ZONE PLAN
10/29/88 12/3/88
FORMULATION OF FINAL THREE ZONE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL PLAN BY CONSULTANTS
12/88
PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED PLAN BY CONSULTANTS TO MAYOR
12/13/88
SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACTS ON FRAMEWORK OF 3 ZONE ELEM AND SEC ASSIGNMENTS AND CONTROLLED CHOICE
12/20/88
PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED PLAN BY CONSULTANTS TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE
12/13/88
SUPERINTENDENT AND STAFF ANALYZE PROPOSED PLAN & FORMULATE TENTATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL COMMITTEE
12/88 1/89
STAFF REVIEW OF FACILITY NEEDS OF SCHOOL SYSTEM IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT NEW ASSIGNMENT PLAN

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDED STUDENT ASSIGNMENT APPROVAL PROCESS

CORRECTED 12 28 88


TENTATIVE RECOMMEND
SUPERINTENDENT HOLDS BRIEFING AND DIA LOGUE SESSIONS ABOUT TENTATIVE RECOMMEND WITH VARIOUS STAFF GROUPS
SUPERINTENDENT HOLDS BRIEFING AND DIA LOGUE SESSIONS ABOUT TENTATIVE RECOMMEND WITH BUSINESS NEIGH BORHOOD UNIVERSITY GROUPS
SUPERINTENDENT HOLDS BRIEFING AND DIA LOGUE SESSIONS ABOUT TENTATIVE RECOMMEND WITH PARTIES TO DESEG CASE & STUDENT ASSIGN CONSULTANTS
SUPERINTENDENT AND STAFF FORMULATE FINAL STUDENT ASSIGNMENT RECOMMENDATIONS 1/20/89
SUPERINTENDENT SUB MITS FINAL STUDENT ASSIGNMENT RECOMMEN DATION TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE 1/26/89
SCHOOL COMMITTEE HOLDS PUBLIC HEARING ON FINAL RECOMMENDED PLAN
WEEK OF 2/6/89
SCHOOL COMMITTEE TAKES ACTION ON FINAL STUDENT ASSIGNMENT PLAN
END OF 90 DAY COURT PROCESS AND STATE REVIEW OF PLAN
5/89
CORRECTED 12 28 88

APPENDIX B: Zone Student Profiles

REGED

NORTH ZONE

GRADE	BLACK	WHITE	ASIAN	HISPANIC	NONWHITE	TOTAL
K1	209 31.6%	275 41.6%	84 12.7%	93 14.1%	386 58.4%	661
K2	355 34.3%	419 40.4%	105 10.1%	157 15.2%	617 59.6%	1036
01	549 42.1%	355 27.2%	144 11.0%	256 19.6%	949 72.8%	1304
02	400 38.3%	293 28.0%	153 14.6%	199 19.0%	752 72.0%	1045
03	407 42.6%	277 29.0%	115 12.0%	157 16.4%	679 71.0%	956
04	395 42.3%	252 27.0%	122 13.1%	165 17.7%	682 73.0%	934
05	322 35.0%	243 26.4%	160 17.4%	195 21.2%	677 73.6%	920
06	365 36.4%	274 27.3%	174 17.3%	190 18.9%	729 72.7%	1003
07	382 35.0%	270 24.8%	215 19.7%	223 20.5%	820 75.2%	1090
08	320 33.3%	256 26.6%	187 19.5%	198 20.6%	705 73.4%	961
TOTALS	3704 37.4%	2914 29.4%	1459 14.7%	1833 18.5%	6996 70.6%	9910

BI-LINGUAL

NORTH ZONE

GRADE	BLACK	WHITE	ASIAN	HISPANIC	NONWHITE	TOTAL
K1	36 13.3%	4 1.5%	134 49.4%	97 35.8%	267 98.5%	271
K2	42 12.6%	10 3.0%	116 34.7%	166 49.7%	324 97.0%	334
01	44 11.9%	12 3.3%	117 31.7%	196 53.1%	357 96.7%	369
02	36 9.9%	19 5.2%	120 32.9%	190 52.1%	346 94.8%	365
03	22 7.3%	12 4.0%	111 36.6%	158 52.1%	291 96.0%	303
04	19 7.6%	8 3.2%	99 39.8%	123 49.4%	241 96.8%	249
05	29 12.0%	11 4.5%	79 32.6%	123 50.8%	231 95.5%	242
06	32 15.2%	7 3.3%	50 23.8%	121 57.6%	203 96.7%	210
07	21 11.1%	18 9.5%	51 27.0%	99 52.4%	171 90.5%	189
08	26 14.9%	14 8.0%	43 24.7%	91 52.3%	160 92.0%	174
TOTALS	307 11.3%	115 4.2%	920 34.0%	1364 50.4%	2591 95.8%	2706

CROSSTABULATION BY LANGUAGE AND GRADE

NORTH ZONE

GRADE	CHIN	CAMB	FRENCH	GREEK	ITAL	CPE VER	LAOT	OTHER	PORTUG	SPAN	VIET	TOTAL
K1	106 39.1%	7 2.6%	5 1.8%	1 0.4%	3 1.1%	29 10.7%	2 0.7%	4 1.5%	1 0.4%	97 35.8%	16 5.9%	271
K2	82 24.6%	11 3.3%	10 3.0%	1 0.3%	5 1.5%	31 9.3%	8 2.4%	2 0.6%	6 1.8%	164 49.1%	14 4.2%	334
01	75 20.3%	15 4.1%	9 2.4%	1 0.3%	8 2.2%	33 8.9%	6 1.6%	8 2.2%	7 1.9%	191 51.8%	16 4.3%	369
02	72 19.7%	21 5.8%	10 2.7%	0 0.0%	7 1.9%	28 7.7%	8 2.2%	6 1.6%	7 1.9%	188 51.5%	18 4.9%	365
03	71 23.4%	13 4.3%	7 2.3%	1 0.3%	6 2.0%	14 4.6%	7 2.3%	7 2.3%	5 1.7%	156 51.5%	16 5.3%	303
04	75 30.1%	6 2.4%	4 1.6%	1 0.4%	5 2.0%	13 5.2%	2 0.8%	6 2.4%	3 1.2%	123 49.4%	11 4.4%	249
05	67 27.7%	6 2.5%	7 2.9%	0 0.0%	7 2.9%	19 7.9%	3 1.2%	3 1.2%	7 2.9%	121 50.0%	2 0.8%	242
06	42 20.0%	4 1.9%	3 1.4%	0 0.0%	3 1.4%	24 11.4%	0 0.0%	1 0.5%	9 4.3%	119 56.7%	5 2.4%	210
07	37 19.6%	6 3.2%	5 2.6%	1 0.5%	7 3.7%	12 6.3%	0 0.0%	1 0.5%	14 7.4%	100 52.9%	6 3.2%	189
08	33 19.0%	5 2.9%	11 6.3%	0 0.0%	11 6.3%	13 7.5%	0 0.0%	2 1.1%	9 5.2%	88 50.6%	2 1.1%	174
TOTALS	660 24.4%	94 3.5%	71 2.6%	6 0.2%	62 2.3%	216 8.0%	36 1.3%	40 1.5%	68 2.5%	1347 49.8%	106 3.9%	2706

SPEC. NEEDS

NORTH ZONE

GRADE	BLACK	WHITE	ASIAN	HISPANIC	NONWHITE	TOTAL
K1	18 36.7%	16 32.7%	5 10.2%	10 20.4%	33 67.3%	49
K2	52 34.4%	61 40.4%	7 4.6%	31 20.5%	90 59.6%	151
01	42 44.2%	39 41.1%	4 4.2%	10 10.5%	56 58.9%	95
02	61 45.2%	50 37.0%	6 4.4%	18 13.3%	85 63.0%	135
03	64 52.0%	45 36.6%	2 1.6%	12 9.8%	78 63.4%	123
04	67 47.5%	51 36.2%	2 1.4%	21 14.9%	90 63.8%	141
05	63 42.0%	61 40.7%	2 1.3%	24 16.0%	89 59.3%	150
06	54 45.4%	34 28.6%	2 1.7%	29 24.4%	85 71.4%	119
07	62 57.9%	26 24.3%	4 3.7%	15 14.0%	81 75.7%	107
08	45 47.4%	29 30.5%	5 5.3%	16 16.8%	66 69.5%	95
TOTALS	528	412	39	186	753	1165

BILINGUAL/SPEC. NEEDS

NORTH ZONE

GRADE	BLACK	WHITE	ASIAN	HISPANIC	NONWHITE	TOTAL
K1	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 66.7%	2 33.3%	6 100.0%	6
K2	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 18.8%	13 81.3%	16 100.0%	16
01	1 3.1%	2 6.3%	7 21.9%	22 68.8%	30 93.8%	32
02	3 6.1%	4 8.2%	3 6.1%	39 79.6%	45 91.8%	49
03	2 2.6%	3 3.9%	5 6.6%	66 86.8%	73 96.1%	76
04	4 5.5%	1 1.4%	4 5.5%	64 87.7%	72 98.6%	73
05	5 7.0%	7 9.9%	3 4.2%	56 78.9%	64 90.1%	71
06	8 16.3%	1 2.0%	2 4.1%	38 77.6%	48 98.0%	49
07	7 13.0%	6 11.1%	0 0.0%	41 75.9%	48 88.9%	54
08	4 14.8%	3 11.1%	3 11.1%	17 63.0%	24 88.9%	27
TOTALS	34 7.5%	27 6.0%	34 7.5%	358 79.0%	426 94.0%	453

REGED

WEST ZONE

GRADE	BLACK	WHITE	ASIAN	HISPANIC	NONWHITE	TOTAL
K1	397 39.6%	485 48.4%	15 1.5%	105 10.5%	517 51.6%	1002
K2	611 46.7%	550 42.0%	18 1.4%	129 9.9%	758 58.0%	1308
01	865 57.2%	429 28.4%	27 1.8%	192 12.7%	1084 71.6%	1513
02	753 60.9%	295 23.9%	18 1.5%	170 13.8%	941 76.1%	1236
03	714 61.8%	272 23.5%	11 1.0%	159 13.8%	884 76.5%	1156
04	666 63.5%	227 21.7%	17 1.6%	138 13.2%	821 78.3%	1048
05	634 62.0%	213 20.8%	21 2.1%	155 15.2%	810 79.2%	1023
06	632 61.9%	205 20.1%	24 2.4%	160 15.7%	816 79.9%	1021
07	726 59.5%	317 26.0%	21 1.7%	157 12.9%	904 74.0%	1221
08	551 53.5%	297 28.8%	14 1.4%	168 16.3%	733 71.2%	1030
TOTALS	6549 56.7%	3290 28.5%	186 1.6%	1533 13.3%	8268 71.5%	11558

BI-LINGUAL

WEST ZONE

GRADE	BLACK	WHITE	ASIAN	HISPANIC	NONWHITE	TOTAL
K1	9 8.0%	11 9.8%	7 6.3%	85 75.9%	101 90.2%	112
K2	12 8.8%	8 5.8%	10 7.3%	107 78.1%	129 94.2%	137
01	28 14.5%	19 9.8%	9 4.7%	137 71.0%	174 90.2%	193
02	29 17.0%	17 9.9%	13 7.6%	112 65.5%	154 90.1%	171
03	27 13.9%	15 7.7%	7 3.6%	145 74.7%	179 92.3%	194
04	21 13.9%	14 9.3%	8 5.3%	108 71.5%	137 90.7%	151
05	27 18.4%	14 9.5%	5 3.4%	101 68.7%	133 90.5%	147
06	17 15.7%	8 7.4%	3 2.8%	80 74.1%	100 92.6%	108
07	15 14.0%	11 10.3%	5 4.7%	76 71.0%	96 89.7%	107
08	25 20.2%	13 10.5%	6 4.8%	80 64.5%	111 89.5%	124
TOTALS	210 14.5%	130 9.0%	73 5.1%	1031 71.4%	1314 91.0%	1444

CROSSTABULATION BY LANGUAGE AND GRADE

WEST ZONE

GRADE	CHIN	CAMB	FRENCH	GREEK	ITAL	CPE VER	LAOT	OTHER	PORTUG	SPAN	VIET	TOTAL
K1	4 3.6%	2 1.8%	9 8.0%	11 9.8%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.9%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	85 75.9%	0 0.0%	112
K2	3 2.2%	4 2.9%	11 8.0%	8 5.8%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	108 78.8%	2 1.5%	137
01	4 2.1%	3 1.6%	27 14.0%	18 9.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	139 72.0%	1 0.5%	193
02	5 2.9%	5 2.9%	28 16.4%	11 6.4%	0 0.0%	1 0.6%	1 0.6%	4 2.3%	0 0.0%	114 66.7%	2 1.2%	171
03	4 2.1%	3 1.5%	27 13.9%	15 7.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.5%	0 0.0%	144 74.2%	0 0.0%	194
04	3 2.0%	1 0.7%	20 13.2%	12 7.9%	0 0.0%	1 0.7%	1 0.7%	4 2.6%	0 0.0%	108 71.5%	1 0.7%	151
05	2 1.4%	1 0.7%	26 17.7%	11 7.5%	0 0.0%	1 0.7%	0 0.0%	3 2.0%	1 0.7%	101 68.7%	1 0.7%	147
06	1 0.9%	1 0.9%	15 13.9%	5 4.6%	0 0.0%	2 1.9%	0 0.0%	3 2.8%	0 0.0%	80 74.1%	1 0.9%	108
07	1 0.9%	1 0.9%	14 13.1%	10 9.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 1.9%	0 0.0%	78 72.9%	1 0.9%	107
08	5 4.0%	1 0.8%	25 20.2%	10 8.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 2.4%	0 0.0%	80 64.5%	0 0.0%	124
TOTALS	32 2.2%	22 1.5%	202 14.0%	111 7.7%	0 0.0%	5 0.3%	5 0.3%	20 1.4%	1 0.1%	1037 71.8%	0 0.0%	1444

SPEC. NEEDS

WEST ZONE

GRADE	BLACK	WHITE	ASIAN	HISPANIC	NONWHITE	TOTAL
K1	21 39.6%	26 49.1%	0 0.0%	6 11.3%	27 50.9%	53
K2	86 54.1%	45 28.3%	1 0.6%	27 17.0%	114 71.7%	159
01	63 55.8%	35 31.0%	0 0.0%	15 13.3%	78 69.0%	113
02	77 63.1%	36 29.5%	0 0.0%	9 7.4%	86 70.5%	122
03	101 67.8%	35 23.5%	3 2.0%	10 6.7%	114 76.5%	149
04	89 64.0%	40 28.8%	0 0.0%	10 7.2%	99 71.2%	139
05	98 61.6%	40 25.2%	2 1.3%	19 11.9%	119 74.8%	159
06	86 68.8%	25 20.0%	0 0.0%	14 11.2%	100 80.0%	125
07	68 54.4%	36 28.8%	0 0.0%	21 16.8%	89 71.2%	125
08	84 64.6%	31 23.8%	0 0.0%	15 11.5%	99 76.2%	130
TOTALS	773 60.7%	349 27.4%	6 0.5%	146 11.5%	925 72.6%	1274

BILINGUAL/SPEC. NEEDS

WEST ZONE

GRADE	BLACK	WHITE	ASIAN	HISPANIC	NONWHITE	TOTAL
K1	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0
K2	0 0.0%	1 7.1%	0 0.0%	13 92.9%	13 92.9%	14
01	2 12.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	14 87.5%	16 100.0%	16
02	0 0.0%	1 3.8%	0 0.0%	25 96.2%	25 96.2%	26
03	1 2.2%	4 8.9%	1 2.2%	39 86.7%	41 91.1%	45
04	7 16.7%	1 2.4%	2 4.8%	32 76.2%	41 97.6%	42
05	4 10.8%	4 10.8%	0 0.0%	29 78.4%	33 89.2%	37
06	1 2.7%	2 5.4%	1 2.7%	33 89.2%	35 94.6%	37
07	0 0.0%	1 2.9%	0 0.0%	34 97.1%	34 97.1%	35
08	0 0.0%	2 10.5%	0 0.0%	17 89.5%	17 89.5%	19
TOTALS	15 5.5%	16 5.9%	4 1.5%	236 87.1%	255 94.1%	271

BI-LINGUAL

EAST ZONE

GRADE	BLACK	WHITE	ASIAN	HISPANIC	NONWHITE	TOTAL
K1	28 21.5%	0 0.0%	43 33.1%	59 45.4%	130 100.0%	130
K2	61 36.5%	5 3.0%	35 21.0%	66 39.5%	162 97.0%	167
01	48 27.7%	1 0.6%	42 24.3%	82 47.4%	172 99.4%	173
02	62 34.8%	3 1.7%	42 23.6%	71 39.9%	175 98.3%	178
03	56 32.9%	1 0.6%	41 24.1%	72 42.4%	169 99.4%	170
04	45 32.1%	2 1.4%	24 17.1%	69 49.3%	138 98.6%	140
05	36 30.0%	3 2.5%	15 12.5%	66 55.0%	117 97.5%	120
06	43 39.1%	3 2.7%	11 10.0%	53 48.2%	107 97.3%	110
07	48 44.4%	1 0.9%	12 11.1%	47 43.5%	107 99.1%	108
08	49 57.6%	2 2.4%	14 16.5%	20 23.5%	83 97.6%	85
TOTALS	476 34.5%	21 1.5%	279 20.2%	605 43.8%	1360 98.5%	1381

REGED

EAST ZONE

GRADE	BLACK	WHITE	ASIAN	HISPANIC	NONWHITE	TOTAL
K1	374 45.1%	387 46.6%	19 2.3%	50 6.0%	443 53.4%	830
K2	600 52.7%	438 38.5%	32 2.8%	69 6.1%	701 61.5%	1139
01	912 64.7%	341 24.2%	52 3.7%	105 7.4%	1069 75.8%	1410
02	807 66.0%	280 22.9%	37 3.0%	98 8.0%	942 77.1%	1222
03	705 67.3%	226 21.6%	22 2.1%	94 9.0%	821 78.4%	1047
04	683 64.5%	248 23.4%	48 4.5%	80 7.6%	811 76.6%	1059
05	635 67.8%	215 22.9%	25 2.7%	62 6.6%	722 77.1%	937
06	707 65.3%	252 23.3%	43 4.0%	80 7.4%	830 76.7%	1082
07	716 62.6%	274 24.0%	45 3.9%	108 9.4%	869 76.0%	1143
08	557 57.7%	255 26.4%	45 4.7%	108 11.2%	710 73.6%	965
TOTALS	6696 61.8%	2916 26.9%	368 3.4%	854 7.9%	7918 73.1%	10834

CROSSTABULATION BY LANGUAGE AND GRADE

EAST ZONE

GRADE	CHIN	CAMB	FRENCH	GREEK	ITAL	CPE VER	LAOT	OTHER	PORTUG	SPAN	VIET	TOTAL
K1	6 4.6%	0 0.0%	9 6.9%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	18 13.8%	2 1.5%	1 0.8%	0 0.0%	59 45.4%	35 26.9%	130
K2	2 1.2%	3 1.8%	26 15.6%	1 0.6%	0 0.0%	35 21.0%	2 1.2%	2 1.2%	1 0.6%	66 39.5%	29 17.4%	167
01	5 2.9%	3 1.7%	26 15.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	22 12.7%	3 1.7%	1 0.6%	0 0.0%	82 47.4%	31 17.9%	173
02	3 1.7%	6 3.4%	35 19.7%	1 0.6%	0 0.0%	25 14.0%	5 2.8%	2 1.1%	3 1.7%	70 39.3%	28 15.7%	178
03	4 2.4%	4 2.4%	28 16.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	27 15.9%	2 1.2%	2 1.2%	0 0.0%	72 42.4%	31 18.2%	170
04	5 3.6%	3 2.1%	13 9.3%	1 0.7%	0 0.0%	30 21.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.7%	71 50.7%	16 11.4%	140
05	3 2.5%	3 2.5%	24 20.0%	1 0.8%	0 0.0%	14 11.7%	1 0.8%	0 0.0%	1 0.8%	64 53.3%	9 7.5%	120
06	0 0.0%	2 1.8%	22 20.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	20 18.2%	1 0.9%	2 1.8%	1 0.9%	54 49.1%	8 7.3%	110
07	1 0.9%	3 2.8%	25 23.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	22 20.4%	1 0.9%	0 0.0%	3 2.8%	46 42.6%	7 6.5%	108
08	1 1.2%	2 2.4%	35 41.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	13 15.3%	0 0.0%	2 2.4%	1 1.2%	20 23.5%	11 12.9%	85
TOTALS	30 2.2%	29 2.1%	243 17.6%	4 0.3%	0 0.0%	226 16.4%	17 1.2%	12 0.9%	11 0.8%	604 43.7%	0.0%	1381

SPEC. NEEDS

EAST ZONE

GRADE	BLACK	WHITE	ASIAN	HISPANIC	NONWHITE	TOTAL
K1	24 49.0%	20 40.8%	0 0.0%	5 10.2%	29 59.2%	49
K2	78 61.4%	46 36.2%	1 0.8%	2 1.6%	81 63.8%	127
01	67 63.8%	34 32.4%	0 0.0%	4 3.8%	71 67.6%	105
02	82 65.1%	31 24.6%	1 0.8%	12 9.5%	95 75.4%	126
03	77 58.3%	47 35.6%	0 0.0%	8 6.1%	85 64.4%	132
04	94 62.7%	44 29.3%	0 0.0%	12 8.0%	106 70.7%	150
05	93 66.9%	35 25.2%	3 2.2%	8 5.8%	104 74.8%	139
06	91 65.5%	35 25.2%	0 0.0%	13 9.4%	104 74.8%	139
07	75 60.0%	41 32.8%	1 0.8%	8 6.4%	84 67.2%	125
08	76 65.5%	28 24.1%	1 0.9%	11 9.5%	88 75.9%	116
TOTALS	757 62.7%	361 29.9%	7 0.6%	83 6.9%	847 70.1%	1208

BILINGUAL/SPEC. NEEDS

EAST ZONE

GRADE	BLACK	WHITE	ASIAN	HISPANIC	NONWHITE	TOTAL
K1	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	1 100.0%	1
K2	1 10.0%	0 0.0%	1 10.0%	8 80.0%	10 100.0%	10
01	1 10.0%	0 0.0%	1 10.0%	8 80.0%	10 100.0%	10
02	1 5.6%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	17 94.4%	18 100.0%	18
03	2 5.6%	2 5.6%	2 5.6%	30 83.3%	34 94.4%	36
04	4 12.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	28 87.5%	32 100.0%	32
05	3 8.6%	0 0.0%	1 2.9%	31 88.6%	35 100.0%	35
06	7 18.4%	1 2.6%	1 2.6%	29 76.3%	37 97.4%	38
07	3 9.7%	0 0.0%	4 12.9%	24 77.4%	31 100.0%	31
08	3 16.7%	0 0.0%	4 22.2%	11 61.1%	18 100.0%	18
TOTALS	25 10.9%	3 1.3%	14 6.1%	187 81.7%	226 98.7%	229

Controlled Choice Assignments: A New and More Effective Approach to School Desegregation

Michael J. Alves and Charles V. Willie

The authors argue that conventional mandatory and voluntary school desegregation techniques have failed to provide minority students with maximum feasible relief from invidious discrimination because they do not redress the root causes of segregation. They demonstrate that residential-based student assignment plans as well as plans that give students limited access to a few educationally enriched magnet schools are not asymmetrical remedies to wrongful segregation and thus work to perpetuate the racial and social inequities that they purport to correct. The authors offer an alternative approach to school desegregation—controlled choice—that operates independently from residential housing patterns and which explicitly seeks to maximize personal choice within a racially unitary, equitable, and educationally enhanced system of public schooling. Controlled choice was originally pioneered in Cambridge, Mass. during the early 1980s and has recently been adopted in Little Rock, Ark., and Fall River, Mass. The policy is also being actively reviewed by several of the nation's largest school districts including Seattle, Memphis, and Boston.

Racial segregation of students by schools has been a fact of life in the United States because of the official policy of school boards and other governmental agencies and because of neighborhood housing patterns. The most persisting kind of segregation has been that of residential neighborhoods by race, which has been identified as *de facto* segregation. Recognizing this fact, the Supreme Court ruled in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1971) that district courts may alter school attendance zones, group and pair noncontiguous zones, or require busing to a school not closest to the student's home in order to achieve desegregation (Zirkel, 1978, p. 90). In effect, courts were authorized to manipulate neighborhoods if necessary to achieve desegregation in education.

The manipulations most frequently employed have been neighborhood-based school desegregation plans that are least offensive to whites (Willie, 1984, pp. 43–44). They have not achieved the greatest amount of desegregation practicable for racial and ethnic minority students. If the purpose of the remedy in a school desegregation court case is to put parties in as close proximity as

Michael J. Alves, Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity, Massachusetts Department of Education, 1385 Hancock St., Quincy, MA 02169. Charles V. Willie, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University.

The Urban Review © 1987 Agathon Press, Inc Vol. 19, No. 2, 87

possible to the position they would occupy had there been no injury or loss, then the many different neighborhood based desegregation schemes have been ineffective, they have not routed out segregation and redressed the grievances of the minority plaintiffs who won the court cases.

For example, Dallas, Texas, proposed a desegregation plan that left two thirds of its black students in segregated schools in the East Oak Cliff section of that city (Alpert, White, and Geisel, 1981, pp. 170-171). Mobile, Alabama, asked the court to declare that it was a unitary, desegregated school system while "41 percent of the black metropolitan students were in all black or nearly all black schools" (Foley, 1981, p. 203). These proposed plans achieved far less school desegregation than they could have. If segregated housing patterns have contributed to much of the school segregation that this nation has experienced, then it is folly to attempt to overcome this source of segregation with desegregation plans that are dependent on residential location.

According to Herbert Richardson, there must be an asymmetry between the form in which evil manifests itself and the form of our opposition to it (Richardson, 1968, p. 202). Martin Luther King, Jr., stated the proposition this way: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that" (King, 1964, p. 45). Using a neighborhood based plan to overcome *de facto* or *de jure* segregation is not very helpful. This approach is not asymmetrical to the evil of segregated housing it seeks to correct.

Yet, the most common school desegregation plans involve neighborhood based remedies such as the *redrawing of school attendance boundaries*. It is difficult to achieve racial desegregation by this method because the boundaries, for example, for elementary schools usually are too small to embrace a mixed racial population.

Another neighborhood-based approach has been the *pairing* of two contiguous student attendance zones that have racially identifiable populations. Under such an arrangement, the schools in the two attendance zones can be linked so that one school may house elementary school grades one, two, and three and the other school, grades four, five, and six. All students in the two zones attend the first school together for the lower division elementary grades and the second school for the upper-division elementary grades. Thus, "by combining two contiguous attendance zones and changing the grade configuration of two schools, both schools are desegregated and reflect the combined racial composition of the two zones" (Hughes, Gordon, and Hillman, 1980, p. 56). While the pairing approach achieves some desegregation, it does this by violating an important principle of education, particularly the principle of continuity in education in the same building for young people during the period in their socialization when continuity is most important.

Still another neighborhood based arrangement is to pair student bodies in school attendance zones that do not share a common boundary. Again, this approach achieves some desegregation, but the interruption of a continuous experience in the same learning environment is a limitation of this approach too.

Finally, *clustering* of several neighborhoods has been used to desegregate

racially identifiable schools in the neighborhoods that are clustered. The clustering arrangement permits students to remain in segregated neighborhood schools until they reach, for example, the fifth and sixth grades of elementary school, which they may attend in a desegregated common school. Obviously, this is a part-time desegregation only and does not fully redress the grievances of minority plaintiffs due to segregated education. Some clustering arrangements that, for example, involve three schools are similar to the pairing approach between two schools, except that all students may have a desegregated education in one school of the cluster in grades one and two, and in another school of the cluster for grades three and four, and in a third school of the cluster for grades five and six (Hughes et al., pp. 59-61). The limitation of this approach is the same as that discussed in pairing, with even greater disruption in continuity.

More radical than clustering or pairing to achieve desegregation is the closing of a school building, especially in a segregated neighborhood, and dispersing its homogeneous student body into other schools where the racial characteristics of the new students contribute to desegregation. Some educational planners have labeled school closings both a blessing and a curse – a

> blessing [because] obsolete facilities can be taken out of service and . . . [a] curse with the notion of the "neighborhood school" [in which] most citizens favor taking unused facilities out of service as long as it is not their school. (Hughes et al., p. 16)

School closings have had greatest impact in the dispersion of residents in inner city, black neighborhoods.

Random population shifts in racially segregated neighborhood housing patterns have defeated many neighborhood-based school desegregation plans, even those that appeared to be successful when first implemented. For example, Pasadena, Calif., desegregated its schools. But following the year of desegregation, an increasing number of schools drifted out of compliance with the desegregation requirement. Pasadena claimed that it could not continue the desegregation that it had achieved because of racial changes in the distribution of its population by neighborhoods (*Pasadena City Board of Education v. Spangler*, 1976).

Robert Dentler and Marvin Scott have written that unless neighborhood based student attendance zones are readjusted in response to changing population patterns, a school desegregation plan of genocide or residential housing units will be defeated. For example, they said of Boston that "if the genocide units go unchanged . . . the Boston schools will be resegregated" (Dentler and Scott, 1981, p. 72). Pasadena and other communities now claim that "once desegregation of student populations is achieved to eliminate school system discrimination brought about by official action, school officials may not be required to make yearly alterations of student assignment plans . . ." (Zirkel, 1978, p. 106).

All of this suggests that neighborhood based school desegregation plans

represent only a short term victory and do not eliminate segregated education root and branch. Even when they work, they achieve the goal of mixing children of different racial heritages but do not necessarily guarantee an enhanced education.

Asymmetrical approaches to school desegregation that differ from the neighborhood based approaches are freedom of choice plans and majority to minority transfers. However, these plans have not been effective in achieving school desegregation. Indeed, when these are the only plans in use, they tend to result in increased segregation since they provide no inducement for parents to make cross-racial school choices.

Although they are asymmetrical to neighborhood based school desegregation plans, voluntary plans (which is the name sometimes given to choice based approaches) are effective in school desegregation only if they are designed to enhance the quality of education that students receive. The quality enhancement factor is one of the key ingredients on a good school desegregation plan, usually it is not considered in nonneighborhood based plans such as freedom of choice and majority to minority transfer arrangements.

In some of the court cases that were combined in the *Brown* decision of the Supreme Court, authorities were told that segregation was damaging because it was all bound up with discrimination in the educational process (Kluger, 1975, p. 444). Nevertheless, a lawyer connected with the Civil Liberties Union in Boston argued that the court should evaluate plans placed before it not on the basis of the educational quality of the plans, but rather on the basis of whether or not they meet the standards for school desegregation (Willie, 1978, p. 14). Such a statement ignored the finding of the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) that "segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other 'tangible' factors may be equal, deprive[s] the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities." The court believed that desegregation would enhance the quality of education of minority students, but the desegregation planners have tended to ignore this requirement.

In sum, residentially based plans that mandatorily assign students to schools outside of their immediate neighborhoods tend to destabilize over time and have no inherent educational value. The central issue with these plans is not that they require students to attend a particular school (the overwhelming majority of all schoolchildren are mandatorily assigned to public schools in the United States), but rather they have not sustained effective desegregation outcomes for minority and poor children. Similarly, voluntary plans by design have only a limited remedial impact and therefore cannot provide relief on a districtwide basis. Voluntary transfer strategies provide relief but no inducement for students to make crossracial school selections. In general, residential based desegregation plans hold the plaintiffs and the educational planners hostage to housing resegregative forces that are beyond their control.

An alternative to neighborhood based school attendance zones for the purpose of overcoming discrimination in education is the so-called "effective schools"

model. It has been advocated by Ronald Edmonds, Derrick Bell, Barbara Sizemore, and others (Edmonds, 1979, pp. 28–32; Bell, 1981; Sizemore, 1978).

Derrick Bell states that "it is now possible to identify a number of public schools serving poor, nonwhite children, and serving them in an educationally effective fashion." The components of effectiveness, according to Bell, are school leadership, parental participation, and accountable teachers. He classifies these components as "educationally oriented relief" to racial discrimination, and concludes that these rather than racial balance "should be sought in future judicial decisions" (1981, p. 201).

Bell further claims that "racial separation outlawed in the *Brown* case was but one manifestation of the racism that adversely affected minority children in segregated schools" (ibid., p. 200). He has counseled educational planners to address all aspects of racism, not just separation.

Specifically, Bell mentions the exploration of "techniques intended to improve the educational effectiveness of schools attended by nonwhite children." He believes that these techniques should be addressed as ways of overcoming what he has characterized as "great damage" to minority children in desegregated schools (ibid., p. 201).

That "more than half of the country's minority children live in the largest school districts . . . that . . . tend to be majority nonwhite" is, in Bell's opinion, a demographic reality that school desegregation will be unable to remedy (p. 198). Thus, he advises communities to devise plans that contain "real potential for improving educational opportunities for blacks without the cost and disruption of busing . . ." (p. 201).

Despite his advocacy of effective schools rather than racial balance as the better remedy for overcoming racial discrimination in education, Bell acknowledges that "the real evil was and is the persistent pattern of giving priority to the needs and interests of whites in a school system without regard to whether this policy disadvantages blacks." He admits that "racially separate schools facilitated the white priority phenomenon . . ." (pp. 200–201), but does not indicate how "the white priority phenomenon" can be eliminated in favor of effective education for all in racially segregated schools. By accepting racially segregated schools as a demographic reality that cannot be easily changed and attempting to enhance them through the effective schools model, Bell has accepted contemporary segregation as a way of overcoming the discriminatory effects of past segregation. His remedy is not asymmetrical, as it should be, to the evil that he is attempting to resist. Barbara Sizemore, who believes, as Bell does, that education should be the primary planning concern in school desegregation, and who has demonstrated that effective schools can have a beneficial outcome for minority students, nevertheless states that "an integrated society is desirable" (1978, p. 68).

Another limitation of Bell's recommendation is the incomplete analysis on which it is based. He tells us that "a number" of public schools serve poor and nonwhite children "in an educationally effective fashion" but does not indicate

how great or how small is that number. Moreover, the phrase "educationally effective fashion" is not operationally defined.

In New Haven, James Comer has produced tangible evidence of the benefit of the effective schools model in overcoming the discriminatory effects of past experiences of segregation. Based on a decade of intervention activity and observations of it in the King School, an inner city, predominantly black institution, Comer reported that the fourth grade at that school, for example, had risen to second or third rank among all schools on student attendance and to first rank in teacher attendance. Changes in achievement occurred too. From a rank of twentieth in reading and last in mathematics among thirty one schools in the city before the program of intervention, the King School during the course of a decade rose to the tenth rank on student performance in these two subject matter areas. Moreover, the King School developed "a positive school climate" in which there was minimal student conflict, high motivation, and desirable interpersonal relations (Comer, 1980, pp. 74–75).

The King School is one of a number of schools that Bell presumably had in mind which is providing effective education for minority students in a predominantly black inner city setting. Comer believes that the program of the King School can be replicated. But the rate of replication casts doubt on the effective schools model as a comprehensive remedy for overcoming past effects of racial discrimination in education.

Comer says that one or more schools in a system can be established primarily as development units, as models for change throughout the system. He limits the number to prevent "dissipation" of a change-oriented or school development program. When the program design involves too many people at once, he says it tends to "evoke widespread anxiety" (ibid., p. 236). If the whole system must be involved in the change process, Comer still recommends "concentrat[ing] efforts in four or five schools" (p. 237). The New Haven experience demonstrates that the effective schools model is helpful, but that it must be phased in. The phasing in process is necessarily slow, in the opinion of Comer. Otherwise, the entire program may be jeopardized.

While the effective schools model focuses desegregation concern on enhancing education, as it should, schools so modeled in segregated communities are ways of attempting to provide a better education for blacks and other minorities without dealing with the evil of segregation. The educational relief that such an arrangement may yield is likely to be short term, if Bell's assertion is true that "racially separate schools facilitated the white property phenomenon," and if the Supreme Court's finding in *Brown* (1954) is still valid that segregated educational facilities are inherently unequal. In addition to violating the principle of asymmetry in social action by attempting to grant relief from segregation through a segregated medium, the effective schools model cannot be implemented with sufficient speed to root out discriminatory effects of education now. In *Green* v. *County Board of Education* (1968), the Supreme Court said, "Effective plans must be adopted immediately so that the Fourteenth

Amendment requirement of equal protection under the law for black students can be met."

Both neighborhood based student attendance zones and the effective schools model are inadequate for overcoming discrimination in education due to racial segregation. The neighborhood-based student attendance zone attempts to group disparate populations into a common pool to achieve desegregation, but does nothing about enhancing education. The effective schools model enhances education but does nothing about achieving desegregation. Both approaches are too simplistic for the complex problem they attempt to remedy. What is needed is a remedy that achieves desegregation as well as enhanced education and that gives promise of achieving these for the long term.

Magnet schools that offer a curriculum of both regular and specialized courses are popular as desegregation tools because they focus on educational quality and guarantee desegregation. Their major limitation in school desegregation planning is that they serve only a limited number of students; magnet schools may desegregate up to one-third of the students in a school system, but not more than this amount. They, therefore, cannot be the only desegregation method used. Hughes et al. have observed "no instance where a major school system has achieved noticeable desegregat[ion in] its public schools by using a voluntary magnet program" (p. 20).

Milwaukee has been touted as a city that desegregated its schools using magnet schools. The beneficial aspects of the Milwaukee plan have been recognized. (See the case study by Bennett, 1984.) The Milwaukee plan is worthy but also has serious defects. It is worthy because of the assumptions on which it is based.

> It never assumed that the simple mixing of students of various ethnic backgrounds would alone have much consequence for improving learning. . . . The Milwaukee desegregation plan was formulated on the belief that a great amount of student movement in the system would be engendered by diversifying the educational offering. That is, parents would be apt to choose other than their neighborhood school if there was a compelling motivation to do so. Therefore, in the development of the desegregation plan the use of magnet schools . . . was envisioned. (Bennett, 1984, p. 85)

Milwaukee operates approximately forty magnet schools in a system that has had over the years 120 to 145 schools (Bennett, p. 90). Only 29% of its schools, therefore, has been magnetized.

Since the magnet school is Milwaukee's only desegregative tool, this school system has not fulfilled the constitutional requirements that the plaintiff class receive a desegregated education. Approximately twenty all-black schools continue to operate in Milwaukee, although all whites have received a desegregated education. These schools enroll about 10% of the black students in the system. Black students in these schools continue to receive a segregated education. With the magnet school as its only desegregation tool, Milwaukee has declared that it may be unable to racially balance the twenty all-black

schools that remain in the system, and that in the future more of its other schools may become imbalanced (Bennett, pp. 94, 113). This finding supports the observation by Hughes et al. that no major school system has desegregated its public schools by using only magnet schools.

Moreover, by attempting to desegregate its systems by using magnet schools only, Milwaukee created an inequitable burden for blacks. Most of the regular schools that were converted into magnets were located in predominantly black neighborhoods. The conversion resulted in great dispersion of blacks, who had to use transportation to attend other schools after their neighborhood school had been magnetized. Since magnet schools were deliberately placed in inner city black neighborhoods as a way of inducing white students to choose and desegregate such schools, nine times more black than white students were forced to use transportation to go to and from schools (see Bennett).

The continuation of racially segregated schools, the anticipation that more will become imbalanced in the future, and the disproportionate burden to use transportation required of blacks are serious flaws in the Milwaukee school desegregation plan. The Milwaukee plan was an early attempt to overcome the evil of housing segregation with a school desegregation plan that was asymmetrical to segregated living arrangements. Also, the Milwaukee plan embraced the quality enhancement factor. However, it failed to achieve the greatest amount of desegregation practicable because only one desegregation tool—the magnet schools—was used to provide enhanced desegregated education. Alone, the magnet concept is insufficient to accomplish effective school desegregation. Also when used alone, magnet schools place an unfair burden on inner-city residents to disperse and make way for the new student body of magnet schools, and it leaves a residual of racially segregated all-black schools. The Milwaukee plan, therefore, does not result in a fully desegregated system in which all schools render high quality, desegregated education.

In summary, the conventional desegregation methods discussed above contain serious flaws that undermine efforts to fulfill the requirement of the law that public school systems should be racially unitary, equitable, and instructionally effective for *all* students. Therefore, we argue that a national necessity still exists for the development and implementation of alternative methods of assignment that maximize effective desegregation and educational outcomes on a districtwide basis.

CONTROLLED CHOICE ASSIGNMENTS: GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

Controlled choice is a permanent and holistic method of assignment that aims at maximizing parental and student choice while also achieving effective desegregation and educational outcomes on a districtwide basis. Under controlled choice no student is to be guaranteed an assignment to a particular school, and all parents are to be given the explicit opportunity to select and possibly gain admission to their preferred desegregating schools in or outside of their immediate residential neighborhoods. In addition to expanding personal choice, the policy ensures that both majority and minority students will have equal or genuine proportional access to all schools and programs of choice and that final assignments will be made irrespective of where a child lives within the district. Controlled choice further provides a self-correcting mechanism that prevents resegregation while facilitating the more efficient use of existing school facilities thereby ensuring both stability of assignment and continuity of education for all students during the life of the plan.

Unlike residentially based assignment techniques, the efficacy of controlled choice is not dependent upon the immutability of neighborhood housing patterns. Nor does the policy limit choice to a relatively few magnet or specialized schools and programs. Nor is minority access to an instructionally effective and enhanced education contingent upon the institutionalization of racially segregated public schooling.

As a comprehensive desegregation technique, controlled choice governs *all* student assignment decisions, including: new admissions; intra- and interdistrict transfers; the mainstreaming of bilingual and special needs students into regular or standard education classes; and the reassignment of students resulting from school closures, consolidations, or new school construction. The policy also serves as an innovative planning tool that can readily expedite the creation of more effective magnet or specialized schools while also stimulating the development of improved instructional practices and enhanced educational opportunities in *all* schools and programs throughout the district. Moreover, controlled choice allows local school officials to implement a truly "living" plan that will better accommodate the varying legal, political, ideological, educational, and organizational interests inherent in school desegregation disputes.

In sum, if implemented correctly, controlled choice provides local officials with a *final* student assignment policy that maximizes family choice and effective desegregation outcomes on a districtwide basis, provides stability of assignment and continuity of educational experience, frees the public schools from their hostage status to real estate and other regressive neighborhood interests, and makes all schools and programs available to students of diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. And since controlled choice is grounded in parent empowerment, and uses the reputational method of school choice, the policy gives local school officials a clear mandate to ensure that all desegregating schools provide distinctive or enhanced educational opportunities.

CONTROLLED CHOICE: ESSENTIAL FEATURES AND KEY OPERATING PROCEDURES

However, the extent to which the controlled choice method achieves its intended outcomes hinges on the effective implementation and interaction of at least five essential elements.

1. Eliminating, to the extent practicable, of all individual school attendance boundaries
2. Adopting and enforcing a definition of desegregation that guarantees minority and majority race students with genuine proportional access to all schools and programs of choice
3. Allowing parents and students to make multiple school selections but with no guarantee that they will obtain their first choice schools or programs (although most will)
4. Operating a truly effective parent information and outreach process
5. Ensuring complete honesty and integrity in the disposition of all final assignment decisions

Elimination of Individual School Attendance Boundaries

In order to provide stable and beneficial school desegregation through parent choice, a child's home residence must be taken out of the assignment equation. As noted, residentially based student assignment plans merely hold responsible governmental authorities hostage to demographic and discriminatory forces beyond their control. Such plans have no intrinsic educational value and over time have often worked to perpetuate both racial and socioeconomic segregation. An indisputable fact of American life is that minority and low income families do not necessarily live where they do as a matter of choice. More directly, family income, the availability of affordable housing, and one's race and/or ethnicity usually determine where parents will raise and educate their children.

Although individual school attendance boundaries have been employed primarily as an administrative convenience, they have reinforced the mythology of the neighborhood school as being a so-called "walk in" school. Upon inspection, the geographic configuration of the boundaries usually take on such bizarre shapes that some children never get assigned to the school that is actually closest to their home. Also, while the neighborhood school concept is most strongly associated with elementary education, special arrangements have always been made to allow students to attend elementary schools outside of their immediate attendance area. In fact, a key factor contributing to the popularity of magnet schools is that they give students the option of enrolling in schools beyond their immediate residential neighborhoods. And, of course, in most communities parents, teachers, administrators, and local school board members simply take it for granted that students from differing geographic areas will automatically attend the same secondary schools.

With controlled choice, the notion of *individual* school attendance districts simply has no utility, since parents are able to choose the schools they want their children to attend, including the school that is nearest to their home. *A fundamental principle underlying controlled choice is that all children have a right to an instructionally effective, desegregated education, but that no child has an implied property right to attend a particular public school.*

As a matter of practicability, however, a controlled choice assignment policy will usually be adapted to fit the idiosyncratic nature of the district. The range of parental choices and the extent to which the policy eliminates the impact of discriminatory housing will depend a great deal upon the size and geographic make up of the district, as well as its total student population, number of school facilities, an existing grade structure and feeder patterns. In small to medium districts (under 25 square miles and 15,000 students) controlled choice can be effectively implemented with all schools enrolling students on a districtwide basis.

For instance, in Cambridge, Mass., which is a densely populated city of 6.2 square miles, all thirteen desegregating grammar schools (Cambridge has only one public high school) have enrolled students on a citywide basis since a controlled choice policy was adopted in 1981. However, even though Cambridge is a relatively small city, more than 60% of its students now attend schools outside of their old attendance areas, and the number of students transported has quadrupled (Alves, 1984, p. 10).

On the other hand, in Fall River, Mass., which is a somewhat larger school district than Cambridge, a proposed controlled choice policy has been designed to operate within a configuration of four educational zones or subdistricts that conform to the district's existing middle school attendance areas. In Fall River, which has embraced control choice as a means to achieve greater socioeconomic and linguistic desegregation, parents of elementary school students will have between six and ten school choices, depending upon the zone in which they live, while the four middle schools will enroll students from anywhere in the district.

Of course, in much larger urban or county school districts that have a multiplicity of schools located throughout a broad geographic area, the policy should be implemented within a decentralized framework that is best suited to the district. Experience suggests that in large districts (over 20,000 students), controlled choice will work more effectively by subdividing the district into several educational zones. Each zone or subdistrict should provide a full K-12 sequence of instruction with parents and students being able to choose from among 10 to 15 elementary schools, 3 to 5 intermediate schools, and at least 2 or 3 high schools. Ideally, the geographic boundaries of the zones should be drawn in order to limit maximum travel time to no more than 45 minutes, and each zone should have a school-age population that is reflective of the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of the city as a whole.

The Little Rock School District has recently adopted controlled choice as the method for achieving full desegregation of its more than 26,000 students in 52 schools. The Little Rock plan, at this time, subdivides the city into two enlarged attendance zones containing similar racial and socioeconomic student compositions and providing parents with a wide range of elementary, middle, and high school choices. However, in districts with extreme residential segregation, the policy would be designed to permit interzone transfers and assignments so long as they facilitate actual desegregation.

Definition of Desegregation

It has been well established that racial ratios can be used as a "starting point" in restructuring the racial and ethnic composition of a segregated school district (*Swann v. Charlotte Mecklenberg County Board of Education*, 402 U.S. 1 (1971). While no exact degree of racial mixing or balancing has been uniformly applied to all desegregating school districts, it has been generally recognized that the benefits of a desegregated education are optimally achieved when the racial and ethnic composition of the school most nearly reflects that of the district as a whole.

However, in response to the imposition of *Swann* type remedies, which rely heavily on mandatory assignments, courts have used a wide range of racial standards that aim at minimizing white student reassignments. Consequently, it is not uncommon to find remedial plans that place an arbitrary cap on minority enrollment (no school shall be more than 50% black) or that permit the racial composition of the schools to vary to such an extent that only superficial racial change is accomplished (i.e., a school is considered desegregated when it has a majority enrollment that is within plus or minus 20% of the districtwide proportion of majority race students).

On the other hand, the adoption of a racial balance standard that approximates the actual racial and ethnic distribution of students throughout the district provides local school officials with a "living" definition of desegregation that more naturally adapts to changing conditions during the life of the plan. This remedial principle has been readily accepted with respect to magnet schools that rely on voluntary assignments. In Boston, for example, while Judge W. Arthur Garrity permits community district or nonmagnet schools to have racial and ethnic enrollments that vary up to plus or minus twenty five percentage points from the community district's overall enrollment, the composition of the city's twenty two magnet schools can vary only plus or minus 5% from the citywide racial/ethnic proportions. And in Buffalo, magnet school assignments must reflect the racial composition of the district as a whole.

Since controlled choice makes every school a potential school of choice, actual assignments must be proportional to the racial composition of the district or educational attendance area as a whole. The adoption and enforcement of a definition of desegregation that requires racial enrollments to fall within plus or minus 5 to 10 percentage points not only guarantees desegregation but ensures that both minority and majority students will have genuine proportional access to all schools and programs of choice.

Maximizing Parent Choice

The elimination of individual school attendance boundaries and the adoption of a living definition of desegregation establishes the preconditions for maximizing parent choice within a unitary and equitable system of public schooling. A distinctive feature of controlled choice is that it requires all parents

to explicitly choose the schools and programs they prefer *before* their children are given a permanent assignment. Though the policy allows parents to choose as many schools as are available by their own rank-order preference, no child is to be guaranteed an assignment to a particular school or program of choice. It is the absence of a guaranteed assignment that provides the inducement for parents to select schools outside of their immediate neighborhoods. And since all schools must have racial and ethnic enrollments that truly reflect the diversity of the district as a whole, parents cannot use choice as a way of avoiding desegregation, nor can schools exclude students who are racially or socioeconomically different.

Moreover, it is this "forced choice" dimension of the policy that gives controlled choice its existential power. Just as parents must think about why they should enroll their children in certain schools, each school must face the question of how to become more attractive to students on a desegregative basis. In the competition for academic and social empowerment, controlled choice equalizes the balance of power across racial and economic lines, thus creating a more equitable framework within which parents and educators can operate a truly diverse and distinguished system of public education.

> A requirement that all students explicitly choose their preferred schools is an important component of a desegregation plan that seeks to encourage students to enroll voluntarily in schools other than those in their neighborhood attendance area. The requirement that each student make such a choice means . . . that parents and students will give genuine consideration to which schools are most suited to their interests. (*Memorandum and Order, Diaz v. San Jose Unified School District*, December 31, 1985 17)

IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTROLLED CHOICE

Implementing controlled choice is not as problematic as it may first appear. Most urban school districts have already achieved some measure of desegregation, using conventional methods. The advantage of controlled choice is that it *builds* upon the desegregation that has been attained and provides a final student assignment policy that enable districts to further desegregate to the greatest extent practicable.

In districts in which at least 50% of the students are already enrolled in desegregated schools, local officials may well "grandfather" or "grandmother" all or most of these students into their currently assigned schools as a precondition to implementing controlled choice. This usually can be done without violating the racial balance standard of plus or minus 5 to 10 percentage points. During the first year of implementation, the district may need to increase the variance to plus or minus 10 percentage points for the purpose of allowing more students to remain in their currently assigned schools. Even in districts that have not achieved substantial desegregation, a considerable number of students will no doubt be allowed to stay in their presently assigned schools.

However, once these students have been accommodated, all students who are new to the district, as well as those seeking intradistrict transfers, must be subject to the provisions of the controlled choice assignment policy. By regulating new admissions and transfers on the basis of plus or minus 5 to 10 percentage points, all schools and programs of choice will eventually have racial enrollments that will move naturally reflect the proportion of minority and majority students in the district as a whole. Thus, controlled choice provides local districts with a *living* definition of desegregation that ensures *stability* of assignment. Moreover, controlled choice does not require a complicated or disruptive implementation process and is ideally suited to any school district that has achieved a degree of desegregation and wishes to consolidate its past gains while also making continued desegregation a permanent experience.

School Selection and Assignment Process

Once controlled choice has been adopted as the official policy of a school district, the following procedures are necessary. As stated earlier, the district must identify attendance zones that are heterogeneous and that include not more than twenty-five schools of choice, and it must adopt a definition of desegregation that guarantees genuine proportional access (i.e., 15%).

When these elements of the controlled choice assignment policy are in place, the district is then ready to implement the school selection and assignment process. The implementation of the provisions of the plan requires that the district establish an office of desegregation that will be solely responsible for the implementation of the policy and that includes a districtwide student assignment officer, a districtwide parent coordinator, and a transportation specialist. The officer in charge of desegregation must report directly to the superintendent and have line authority and responsibility to enforce the provisions of the policy independent from local political and bureaucratic interests. This means that the office of desegregation will have sole responsibility for making all final student assignment decisions for schools in all school attendance zones. By centralizing this process, greater efficiency and consistency are provided, and the district is more protected against inappropriate external interference.

To expedite the school selection process, the district must further establish parent information and outreach centers that are directly accessible to all. Ideally, each of the school attendance zones should have a parent information center. The operation of the parent information centers must be decentralized in order to function effectively in the community as parent outreach and recruitment units.

During the first year of controlled choice, student choice or application forms must be executed before the end of the school year, and only after parents have been given ample opportunity to visit schools and meet with prospective staff so that they may make informed school choices. Parents must also be allowed to make multiple school choices by their own rank order of preference. Once their choices have been filed, the student assignment officer then assesses each application on the basis of space availability and racial balance. In the event of oversubscription for a particular school, priority of assignment should first be given to students on the basis of desegregation impact. Districts should also give priority to siblings in the same school, and may give priority to students who live closest to the school as long as such assignments do not violate the racial balance constraint. One should use the latter priority with caution since it could impair achieving socioeconomic heterogeneity between and within racial groups. Perhaps a more equitable procedure when there is oversubscription is to assign students by lottery to achieve greater racial and socioeconomic balance.

If a student does not obtain his or her first choice in accordance with the procedures described above, the student assignment officer then repeats these procedures with respect to second and third choice or until an appropriate assignment can be accommodated. And, as with an effective parent information and outreach process, the viability of controlled choice requires that the disposition of all final assignments be made with complete honesty and integrity. Like the outcome of an election, the accommodation of parent choice cannot be based on favoritism, fraud, or administrative malfeasance. That controlled choice can work to achieve maximum, feasible, and beneficial desegregation has been well demonstrated in Cambridge, Mass., during the past five years.

The Cambridge Plan

On March 3, 1981, the Cambridge (Mass.) School Committee adopted the final phase of its long-range school desegregation plan. This plan was preceded by the implementation of two interim plans in 1979 and 1980 and was subsequently approved by the Massachusetts State Board of Education on March 24, 1981 as a "self-correcting, stable, and equitable solution" to the chronic problem of racial isolation in the Cambridge Public Schools. Since Cambridge has one public high school and no junior high or middle schools, the desegregation process has directly impacted only those schools which enroll kindergarten through eighth grade students.

A distinctive feature of Cambridge's final plan was that it abolished all individual school attendance boundaries at the K-8 level and introduced an alternative student assignment policy that aims at maximizing competition and choice among desegregating schools. Under this policy, which has been described as systemwide "controlled choice," no child is to be assigned to a public school on the basis of his or her home residence, and all parents are to be given the explicit opportunity to select and gain admission to their preferred desegregating schools on a citywide basis.

> This (assignment) policy is designed to provide MAXIMUM CHOICE for parents in selecting the schools their children will attend within the constraints of available space and state and federal desegregation requirements. (Cambridge Desegregation Plan, 17)

In addition to expanding parent choice among and within schools, the

TABLE 2
Mandatory Assignments

Year	Number	Percent	Change
1982	108	12%	
1983	93	9%	9%
1984	65	7%	7%
Totals	266	9%	9%

Beyond allowing parents to make multiple school choices on a districtwide basis, Cambridge also operates an extremely effective parent information and outreach process. In Cambridge, staff from the Parent Information Center (PIC) actively encourage and assist parents in visiting schools and otherwise making informed decisions before they register their children. Over the past few years, the PIC has worked cooperatively with individual schools in coordinating school tours, parent fairs, open houses, and in making a wide range of school specific information available to parents. Of particular note is that the PIC also carries out special recruitment strategies for limited English speaking parents and routinely visits the city's preschool and day care centers that service low income families.

Another feature of the Cambridge policy that facilitates the choice process is that parents are able to enroll their children on an early and continuous basis. In Cambridge, the controlled choice assignment process begins in December for the next school year with actual assignments being made on a monthly basis through the opening of schools in September. Though the rolling admissions process puts pressure on parents to make timely applications, it also gives the district ample opportunity to efficiently administer the policy and to ensure that individual parents are given a great deal of attention and help in selecting appropriate schools.

Also, analysis of the distribution of parent choices indicates that the pattern of school choice is remarkably *similar* for both majority and minority parents, thereby minimizing mandatory assignments due to racial balance. And while parents may have strong first choices, the policy has enabled nearly all schools to become attractive on a consensual basis.

Reducing Racial Isolation

Beyond expanding parent choice, the Cambridge policy has also demonstrated considerable power in preventing resegregation and in further reducing racial isolation in at least 80% of the system's formerly segregated schools. After nearly four full years of implementation, controlled choice assignments have worked to produce stable desegregation outcomes on a systemwide basis. Table 3 delineates the extent to which the proportion of minority students in each desegregating school varies from the systemwide minority percentage with zero as perfect desegregation.

TABLE 3
Extent to Which the Proportion of Minority Students in Each Desegregating School Varies from the Systemwide Minority Percentage

School	1978	1980	1985
Agassiz	12	2	5
Fitzgerald	2	+5	+1
Fletcher	+29	+12	3
Haggerty	13	5	3
Harrington	25	18	4
Kennedy	25	29	11
King	+22	+14	+1
Longfellow	+10	+9	+1
Morse	2	+5	+2
Peabody	15	4	+2
Roberts	+12	+10	+2
Tobin	+20	+9	+1
Graham/Parks	1	1	+6

Prior to the adoption of controlled choice, Cambridge employed a variety of student assignment techniques including M to M transfers, magnet schools, redistricting of individual school attendance districts, pairing, and school closures. However, though these measures were well implemented, they still left a substantial number of students in segregated schools.

On the other hand, with controlled choice the district has nearly achieved perfect desegregation and has effectively resolved its legal dispute with the State Board of Education. With controlled choice, the district has experienced no white flight and, in fact, has seen a significant increase in the proportion of school age children attending the public schools, including a 32% increase in new white students and a 13% increase in new minority students during a four year period (Alves, 1986, pp. 50–52). (See Table 4.)

A key lesson to be learned from Cambridge is that under the correct conditions "controlled choice" can achieve more effective desegregation outcomes than conventional voluntary and mandatory methods of assignments. Analysis of controlled choice assignments in Cambridge during the past four years of implementation shows that:

- No Cambridge public school has drifted toward resegregation.
- All of the system's formerly segregated schools have achieved more stable desegregation outcomes under the instrument of systemwide controlled choice than through the implementation of more conventional reassignment techniques including magnet schools and redistricting.
- By eighth grade, minority students are outperforming white students in math and reading citywide in 60% of the public schools, and similar academic

Cambridge assignment policy was also designed to facilitate the attainment of the following desegregation and education related objectives:

1. To resolve a potential *de jure* segregation dispute with the Massachusetts State Board of Education by reducing racial isolation and preventing resegregation among schools.
2. To provide for both stability of assignment and continuing desegregation with a minimal of mandatory student assignments.
3. To increase public support for desegregating urban schools by attracting and retaining more school age children on the Cambridge Public Schools.
4. To provide enhanced educational opportunities for all students regardless of their race or socio-economic status.

Since its adoption in 1981, controlled choice has functioned as the district's sole method of assignment and has governed all new assignments at the K-8 level, including new admissions, intradistrict transfers, and the mainstreaming of bilingual and special needs students into regular education classes. As of November 1, 1986 the policy affected 9,192 students (53% white, 29% black, 12% Hispanic, and 6% Asian) in thirteen schools (Alves, 1986, p. 45).

As parents enter the district, they are required to undergo a centralized student registration process wherein they are allowed to select at least three schools by rank order of preference. Though parents are able to choose any schools they wish at their child's appropriate grade level, all final assignment decisions are made by the district's Student Assignment Office subject to the constraints of available space and racial balance. In Cambridge, a school is considered desegregated when it has a student enrollment that falls between plus or minus five percentage points of the racial composition of the district as a whole.

Accommodating Parent Choice

From 1982 to 1985, 91% of all students newly entering the Cambridge Public School at the K-8 level have obtained admission to desegregating schools of explicit family choice. Of these 4,000 minority and majority race students, 75% have been assigned to their first choice schools, 16% have received either their second or third choices, and only 9% have been given what can be characterized as a mandatory assignment—when the Student Assignment Officer cannot accommodate a parent's initial school selection (Alves, 1986, p. 49). (See Table 1.) An interesting development in Cambridge is that the number of so-called mandatory assignments has actually decreased during each year of implementation of controlled choice assignments (see Table 2).

During the 1984-85 school year, 94% of all newly entering white students were admitted to a school of choice. And while the proportion of minority students mandatorily assigned was 6% higher than for whites, nearly nine out of ten black, Hispanic, and Asian students in Cambridge still have the chance of being enrolled in a school their parents deem most appropriate.

There are several factors that explain this relatively high accommodation rate

TABLE 1.
Controlled Choice Assignments in the Cambridge Public Schools: Distribution of New Students, 1982–86

School	Total Assigned*	1st Choice	2nd/3rd Choice	Mandatory	1st Choice	2nd/3rd Choice	Mandatory	No Minority	No Whites	White	Students
Agassiz	59	39	12	5	70%	22%	9%	29	21	53%	486
Fitzgerald	78	52	3	1	95%	4%	1%	42	32	55%	455
Fletcher	67	48	16	3	75%	24%	4%	39	28	58%	495
Graham-Parks	52	48	3	1	92%	6%	2%	21	19	56%	448
Haggerty	99	46	10	13	81%	10%	13%	50	38	45%	559
Harrington	118	64	27	23	54%	23%	19%	69	49	42%	584
Kennedy	38	17	5	6	71%	21%	8%	11	8	21%	789
King	142	94	30	18	66%	21%	13%	88	54	38%	375
Longfellow	84	59	17	8	70%	20%	10%	59	25	30%	306
Maria	80	61	12	7	76%	15%	9%	49	31	39%	306
Peabody	132	98	31	5	74%	24%	4%	76	56	42%	485
Roberts	97	73	19	5	75%	20%	5%	57	40	41%	385
Tobin	124	102	58	14	66%	31%	8%	95	75	60%	439
TOTALS											
1985	1,175	823	243	109	70%	21%	9%	95	653	56%	545
1984	944	711	168	65	75%	18%	7%	75	530	56%	571
1983	1,023	760	170	93	74%	17%	9%	95	555	54%	549
1982	890	641	110	108	72%	12%	12%	125	455	51%	515

* Assignment Total Does not include bilingual and special needs students who are mainly assigned on a programmatic basis.

TABLE 4
Cambridge Public Schools: Profile of Desegregation Indices

Year	% White	Annual Change % White	Interracial Exposure (Ones)	Segregation Index (Ones)	Dissimilarity Index (Ones)	Average School Deviation from District % White (Ones)
Pre-desegregation						
1978	66.2	1.0	55.6	16.0	17.4	10.1
Pre-Controlled Choice						
1979	64.8	1.4	55.1	18.9	18.2	11.9
1980	63.7	1.1	57.2	10.2	26.3	12.5
1981	62.8	0.9	60.0	7.8	18.5	7.7
Post-Controlled Choice						
1982	59.5	3.3	57.5	9.8	15.8	6.2
1983	57.5	2.0	56.2	2.3	11.8	6.6
1984	55.4	2.1	54.6	1.4	8.8	4.7
1985	53.8	1.6	53.5	0.6	7.5	3.8
1986	52.4	1.4	52.4	0.0	5.5	3.6
Desegregation Impact of Reinstating Controlled Choice						
	52.4	1.4	48.2	8.0	65.0	12.8

achievement gains have been reported for low income students in 90% of the schools.

- The proportion of school aged children living in the city who actually attend the public schools has increased from 79% in 1980 to 88% in 1985.
- Since the implementation of its new student assignment policy, the Cambridge public schools have achieved more voluntary desegregation than any other school system in Massachusetts history and perhaps even more than any other school system in the United States. As of November 1, 1985, 62% of Cambridge students were enrolled in desegregating schools of choice outside of their old attendance areas.

Perhaps the most important point to be stressed about Cambridge is that since the local school board abolished all individual school attendance districts and introduced controlled choice, all schools have been forced to compete fairly for new students, and all parents have been given the opportunity to choose an educationally appropriate school within a racially unitary and equitable system of public education. Moreover, as implemented in Cambridge, controlled choice has worked to demonstrably facilitate both racial and socioeconomic desegregation and has enabled students to obtain enhanced educational opportunities irrespective of where they happen to live in the city.

CONCLUSIONS

Our conclusion is that controlled choice is a truly comprehensive desegregation and educational improvement strategy that can be readily employed in a variety of settings. As an alternative method of assignment, controlled choice is designed to overcome the deficiencies of conventional student assignment techniques and thus provides an asymmetrical solution to racial and socioeconomic injustice in public schooling.

As demonstrated in Cambridge, controlled choice can work to strengthen public confidence in and support for public education by linking desegregation to educational improvement and by enabling parents to choose the desegregating schools they deem most appropriate for their children. And in Little Rock, a city with a long and controversial history of segregated public schools, controlled choice has been adopted as a way of achieving stable and beneficial desegregation that could not be attained through the use of prior desegregation measures. Moreover, the Cambridge and Little Rock experiences suggest that controlled choice may well have positive transfer value for the thousands of other school districts across the United States that have attempted to desegregate through conventional means.

We also conclude that controlled choice is not necessarily new or radical, but rather builds on essential elements that are present in any desegregating school district. An inherent strength of controlled choice is that it simply takes the next evolutionary step in the nation's quest for quality integrated education. As a holistic desegregation technique, controlled choice is particularly well suited to school districts like Boston, Buffalo, and Milwaukee, which have used a variety of techniques, including magnet schools, to enhance educational opportunities but were unable to fully desegregate all their schools. In these and countless other school districts, controlled choice would allow local officials to consolidate their past gains while expanding parent choice and effective desegregation outcomes on a districtwide basis. And in communities that are experiencing desegregation for the first time, controlled choice provides an opportunity to avoid the mistakes made by other districts that have relied on traditional voluntary and mandatory methods.

With the instrument of controlled choice, all desegregating school districts now have the means to achieve a racially unitary and instructionally effective system of public education that is both equitable and permanent.

REFERENCES

Alper, Geoffrey P., White, Ron, and Geisel, Paul (1981). Dallas, Texas: The intervention of business leaders. In Willie and Greenblatt, *School Desegregation Plans That Work*, pp. 155–171.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Education
Monroe C. Gutman Library, Appian Way
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Programs in Administration,
Planning, and Social Policy

Planning Criteria For New Boston

Student Assignment Plan

I. General Educational Goals

1. To develop a legally acceptable and administratively feasible student assignment plan that accomodates students from kindergarten through grade twelve and that can work simultaneously to:

   a. Increase parent and student choice.

   b. Guarantee racial, ethnic, and linguistic access to all schools and programs of choice.

   c. Enhance the quality of education and to maximize school-based and student-centered educational improvement by empowering the School Committee, the superintendent, other administrators, and teachers to design and implement educational programs that are attractive and responsive to the instructional needs of all students.

   d. Be sufficently flexible and responsive to the needs of parents so that siblings may attend the same school if educationally appropriate, and so that students may attend schools nearest to their home if feasible.

   e. Provide a coherent grade structure that fosters stability of assignment and that insures continuity of instruction and eliminates educational disruption.

   f. Identify decentralized attendance zones that are educationally equivalent.

II. Planning Criteria for Educational Attendance Zones

1. Zones should be geographically large enough to encompass heterogeneous populations but reasonable in size in terms of the length of time students would be transported to and from school (e.g. maximum travel time should be between thirty to forty minutes).

2. Where feasible, zones should link contiguous residential areas that meet the criteria of equity and diversity.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Education
Monroe C. Gutman Library, Appian Way
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Programs in Administration,
Planning, and Social Policy

3. Zones should encompass an equivalent range of educational programs and services and have sufficent instructional space to accommodate all residential students.

4. The racial composition of the students residing in each zone should be reflective of the city as a whole within reasonable parameters so that all racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups have fair access to all schools.

III. Planning Process

1. To achieve the above objectives, we are committed to conducting a collaborative planning process over the next several months during which time we will

   a. Continue to meet with black, white, Hispanic, and Asian parents and a variety of citizens' groups that have been actively concerned and involved with the Boston public schools to obtain their ideas on an appropriate student assignment plan.

   b. Hold forums and small group meetings on a regular basis to enable parents and community groups to react to our specific proposals that impact on student assignment.

   c. Continue to meet and collaborate with the School Superintendent and staff on a regular basis on the structural and administrative details of the plan. We also plan to consult with teachers and principals on the educational implications of the plan.

   d. Continue to keep School Committee members informed about all aspects of the planning process and to make ourselves available to the School Committee members for periodic review of the status of the plan.

   e. Proceed according to the following schedule: Development of Educational Attendance Zones by early October; Analysis and review of educational and administrative implications of the proposed zones by early November; development of student assignment procedures and governing principles by early December; public review and fine-tuning of proposed student assignment plan by early January or sooner;

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Education
Monroe C. Gutman Library, Appian Way
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Programs in Administration,
Planning, and Social Policy

f. We are prepared to advise the School Committee on any modifications that may be required during the State and court-required ratification process.

g. We also are prepared to assist the Superintendent and his staff in preparing the school system and community for the implementation of the new student assignment plan.

2. Based on our experience as educational planners in several communities, we are convinced that the development and implementation of a new student assignment plan that seeks to maximize parental choice and enhance education can only be achieved if the planning process is carried out with integrity and the planners maintain independence, objectivity and work collaboratively with all segments of the community.

Charles Willie C.V.W.
Michael Alves M.J.A.
September 27, 1988

CVW/MJA/jck

December 28, 1988

Sponsored by Juanita B. Wade and Thomas M. O'Reilly

That the School Committee ~~endorses~~ Adopts the Proposed Controlled Choice Assignment Plan for the Boston Public Schools, as presented by Co-Chairs Juanita B. Wade and Thomas M. O'Reilly on December 13, 1988, as the general framework for Boston's new student assignment plan.

That the Superintendent is directed to complete his analysis and review and to develop implementation recommendations for ratification by the School Committee which will include a Phase I implementation date on or before September 1, 1989.

That the School Committee approves the Superintendent's revised timetable of December 28, 1988 for the purpose of adopting the final implementation plans.

The Boston Globe
Founded 1872

WILLIAM O. TAYLOR, *Chairman of the Board and Publisher*
JOHN P. GIUGGIO, *Vice Chairman* JOHN S. DRISCOLL, *Editor*
RICHARD C. OCKERBLOOM, *President* BENJAMIN B. TAYLOR, *Executive Editor*
MARTIN F. NOLAN, *Editor, Editorial Page*

DAVID STANGER, *Executive VP & General Manager*
ARTHUR KINGSBURY, *VP & Treasurer*
MILLARD G. OWEN, *Senior VP Marketing & Sales*
FRANK E. GRUNDSTROM JR., *VP Human Resources*
STEPHEN E. TAYLOR, *Business Manager*
GREGORY L. THORNTON, *VP Employee Relations*
THOMAS F. MULVOY JR., *Managing Editor*
ALFRED S. LARKIN JR., *Deputy Managing Editor*
HELEN W. DONOVAN, *Deputy Managing Editor*
S. J. MICCICHE, *Assistant Executive Editor*
ROBERT L. HEALY, *Associate Editor*
H.D.S. GREENWAY, *Associate Editor*

Publishers
CHARLES H. TAYLOR, *1873-1922* WILLIAM O. TAYLOR, *1922-1955* WM. DAVIS TAYLOR, *1955-1977*

President *Editor* *Editor*
JOHN I. TAYLOR, *1963-1975* L.L. WINSHIP, *1955-1965* THOMAS WINSHIP, *1965-1984*

Boston students' best chance

Tonight the School Committee is expected to take the most important vote affecting Boston public education in almost 20 years. For the first time since court-ordered desegregation, the committee has control over school assignments, and parents will have a say in where their children go to school.

The specific item on the agenda is a plan dividing the city into three zones for assignment purposes and requiring schools and administrators to meet standards. It also calls for accountability from the top down.

Passage of a plan as sound as the one to be considered tonight would seem to be assured. However, resistance to the part that requires decentralization of the system threatens to either stall implementation or kill it altogether.

The plan calls for the appointment of three zone superintendents to oversee and administer operations in his or her zone. Since this work is currently under direct control of the central office, this could decrease the number of jobs at 26 Court St. or take away patronage opportunities.

No one actually says the plan does not deserve a chance, but there are some vague complaints from School Committee members and others. The complaints range from a need for more public hearings to how one neighborhood was divided. Superintendent Laval Wilson, always reluctant to share authority, has drawn up a timetable that would destroy any hope of implementation by next fall. Obviously, there is a desire by some to put the plan on hold until public interest and momentum for change wane.

Two consultants, Charles Willie and Michael Alves, met extensively with all parties and only then wrote a plan. It is the best chance Boston students have had in years for a decent education. It should be approved and implemented.

What the School Committee decides will determine whether the schools move toward a period of improvement and equitable distribution of resources, or whether the education of Boston children continues to be secondary to political fortune. The choice should be obvious; and voters must hold these 13 committee members accountable for their decision.

Boston Herald

PATRICK J. PURCELL, Publisher
KENNETH A. CHANDLER, Editor
ALAN S. EISNER, Managing Editor
RACHELLE COHEN, Editorial Page Editor

For Boston schools, a new era nears

AFTER 14 years of standing by helplessly while others made decisions that should have been theirs, the parents of Boston's public school children are finally on the threshold of a new and challenging era.

Under the new student assignment plan that will be before the School Committee at its meeting today, parents would regain a voice, and the power of choice, in deciding where and by whom their sons and daughters will be educated.

There is some dispute about whether the plan is so sound that it should be approved without delay, as Mayor Flynn is urging, or whether the Committee should make haste slowly in reaching a decision so that it can be improved.

But there can be no doubt that even in its present state, the proposal is a beneficial departure from the arbitrary assignment system now in use, one that gives greater weight to the location of a school than to the quality of education it can provide.

The proposed plan would divide the city into three zones, each operating as if it were an autonomous school system. For each zone, there would be a superintendent to administer the schools, and a council of parents, educators, and community leaders to help improve them.

Principals and teachers would have to "recruit" students by offering better courses and instructors; parents would be able to choose the school in their zone which best meets the needs and abilities of their children. Such an injection of healthy competition into public education in Boston is long overdue. It will not only maintain an integrated school system, but restore the rights of parents to shape the education of their young.

We can understand why the mayor is pushing for early approval: The sooner the Committee adopts the plan, the more time there will be to prepare to put it into effect next September. Nevertheless, on an issue as important as this, the school board must be as convinced of its worth as Flynn is. Those members who want to examine it more closely before voting have the right and the duty to do so — as long as their caution isn't dragged out so unreasonably as to become an obstruction.

For if the momentum to rebuild Boston's schools is stifled or appreciably slowed, it is the children above all who will be the biggest losers.

ROBERT A. JORDAN

A school plan to live with

After more than three intense months of meeting in public and hammering out details, Boston finally has a student-assignment plan that every neighborhood, as well as the federal courts, can easily live with.

The plan, drafted by two educational consultants hired last spring by Mayor Flynn, was submitted this week to the Boston School Committee. All that is needed for the plan to be implemented in the 1988-89 school year is the committee's approval – provided it does not procrastinate.

As one of the consultants, Charles Willie of Harvard, pointed out, there is a three-week "window of opportunity" that the School Committee must not allow to close. If the plan is not approved by mid-January, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for the plan to be in operation next fall.

Right now, because of this plan, there is a political consensus on how to improve the city's educational system. If the window of opportunity closes, then the consensus will fall apart, the momentum will begin to disappear, and the Boston school system will continue to wallow, if not

The plan, called "controlled choice," is a constitutionally sound desegregation plan that fosters cooperation, instead of confrontation, among the races and between the courts and the "anti-forced busing" groups.

Developed by Willie and Michael Alves, a former state education official, the plan has been a success in cities such as Little Rock, Ark., and Seattle and in several Massachusetts cities – including Cambridge, Fall River and Lowell. It has been successful largely because, as summed up in their report, "It gives parents and students more choice, maintains racial fairness and enhances education."

Early reports are that the parents, the educators, the school officials and others involved with the administration of Boston's public school system favor the plan.

The key reason parents like the plan is that more children will be able to attend their first, second or third choice of school. Today, 17 percent of the city's students go to elementary or magnet schools of their choice. Under this plan, that percentage would increase to 90 percent.

What is also good about this plan is that the city's worst schools would be exposed because they would not be among the three choices of most parents, and poor enrollment would result. These schools would come under the scrutiny of "zone improvement councils," which would determine the school's problems and suggest a remedy for turning them into quality schools.

Another good thing about this plan is that it would force school principals to be accountable, and responsible, for improving the quality of education in his or her school.

Right now, as even local educators acknowledge, there are more bad schools than good schools in Boston. The city is still behind the national average in reading scores, and the dropout rate, while slightly improving, is still more than 40 percent. The "controlled choice" plan is designed to turn this around, and chances

As outlined by Alves and Willie, the plan divides the city into three zones, each headed by a superintendent who is responsible for the administration of the schools in his zone. In turn, the superintendent holds the principal responsible for improving a school's educational quality as well as maintaining its racial diversity.

The plan, while assuring black parents that Boston will not return to the days of segregation, also would resolve the questions of parents from East Boston, who are concerned about being involved in any "forced busing." That, say the planners, is simply not going to happen.

When these fears were addressed in the early meetings, something positive happened among parents and educators. As Willie said, "Boston has learned from its own past. This is a community that is growing in maturity. For one thing, I heard not a single thing about 'forced busing' and 'neighborhood schools.' These folks are now focusing on educational enhancement. That's really moving forward.

"They have moved in a decade from focusing on how you get to school, to what school is for."

All of this can happen only if the School Committee gives the city a Christmas present by approving the plan without delay. It would truly make the new year bright for parents and students who finally will get what they have always wanted – a good education.

ALAN LUPO

Flexibility for schools

Thirteen years ago, Ray Flynn was a Southie pol fighting court-ordered busing, and Charles Willie, a black professor of education at Harvard, was one of four masters appointed by the court to try to make busing work.

Today, Flynn is mayor, credited with bringing blacks and whites together, and is about to hire Willie and another consultant to redress some grievances incurred by that busing.

Willie and Michael Alves, a state Education Department desegregation specialist, are being brought in as consultants to help City Hall, the school system, parents and kids work out a new pupil-assignment plan.

Since 1975, the second year of court-ordered busing, where your kid goes to school in the city has depended on strict racial and geographic codes. The coding is symbolic of an inflexible court plan that Willie and the other court-appointed masters had tried, with only limited success, to change.

"To make the racial composition of each school primary and the educational secondary is not in the spirit of the Supreme Court ruling on Brown vs. Board of Education," Willie warned then. It was a time, however, when ideology overruled common sense.

These days, common sense in the name of flexibility is making a comeback. Because Boston's schools, now 70 percent minority, are as racially desegregated as they're going to get, the US Court of Appeals has told the School Committee it can reassign kids to schools as long as it doesn't resegregate.

Flynn's aides and some School Committee members see a new pupil-assignment process as a chance to diminish the frustrations of all parents – hold onto middle-class blacks and whites and maybe even draw a few back, and start improving public education through school-based "reform."

The key is to preserve desegregation, offer families much more choice, and ensure a good education at the end of the kid's bus ride or walk. The problem, Willie says, is that people tend to push one of those elements to the detriment of the two others.

"In Boston," he says, "they fixed on desegregation and forgot about choice and improvement. Today, there's a lot of fixation on choice, and people are forgetting about desegregation and diversity. For others, the fixation is on excellence, and if that means excluding diversity, they feel, so be it. I see the student-assignment process as the medium for linking all three."

That's pretty much how Flynn and his advisers see it. They are somewhat familiar with the work Willie and Alves have done in Seattle and Little Rock and what Alves has done elsewhere in Massachusetts, including Cambridge and Fall River.

Cambridge, with its "controlled choice" program for example, has become a national standard on how to desegregate a school system while giving families a choice of schools. Cambridge officials contend that since that city started its program seven years ago, the proportion of kids going to public school instead of parochial or private school has risen from 70 percent to 90 percent.

In Seattle, Willie and Alves went further and included a school-improvement policy for those schools that fail to attract enough students under a revised voluntary desegregation plan.

Boston can now get the benefit of what Willie and Alves have learned elsewhere.

This seems to be the conclusion Flynn and his advisers have reached. Reaching the same conclusion at about the same time were two School Committee members – Thomas O'Reilly of West Roxbury, and Juanita Wade of Roxbury, who head a special committee on pupil assignments.

Both O'Reilly and Ellen Guiney, the mayor's education adviser, are talking a lot about cooperation between City Hall and Court Street and how, even though Willie and Alves will be paid out of Flynn's budget, the consultants will be working for the whole city (at a daily cost of $300 to $500, Guiney estimates). O'Reilly wants the consultants to meet informally with School Committee members, and City Hall has to determine if it's politically wise to insist that one of its people sit in on those meetings.

Willie says simply, "I'm working for Boston, no matter who is paying me. That's the benefit of being an independent consultant. You have a better chance as a mediating function, and that's how we see ourselves."

Willie is optimistic. He thinks Boston can take advantage of this new opportunity. Good. We need the optimism, and we'll need the mediation. Nothing involving education ever came easily in this city.

Alan Lupo is a Globe columnist.

Assignment plan scheduled for early January

Vowing to work at a brisk pace, two consultants drafting a new student assignment plan for Boston said last night they will have a proposal before the School Committee by early January and hope a new plan will be in effect by next fall.

Charles Willie and Michael Alves said they will try to obtain input from parents, teachers, administrators and public officials.

The consultants also said the city may have to open some new schools in Roxbury and Dorchester, predominantly minority neighborhoods with no school within walking distance of many homes. Said Alves: "Any serious inequity can't be pushed under the rug."

Willie and Alves said they expect the proposal to cover students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.

They said the new plan will be a controlled-choice plan, enabling parents to rank schools in order of preference, but without promising their first choice. Preference will be given to parents who want to keep siblings in the same school.

The racial composition of each school should be roughly the same as the citywide racial breakdown for students, they said.

Parents are also expected to be offered choices of schools within a zone, ranging from the school closest to the child's home to one no further than a 40-minute bus ride.

– PATRICIA WEN

Boston Globe 9/28/88

BOSTON GLOBE 10/1/88

ROBERT A. JORDAN

Quality in schools

Boston has an opportunity to move permanently beyond the era of court-ordered busing while bringing desperately needed quality education to its schools – but only if two men who can make this happen are allowed to do their jobs.

Charles (Chuck) Willie, a Harvard sociologist, and Michael Alves, on leave from the state Department of Education, have opened new progressive eras in various school systems across the country with a creative, and successful, formula called "controlled choice."

As cities from Seattle to Fall River can testify, controlled choice has led simultaneously to a peaceful, and even acceptable, desegregation along with a sharp rise in quality education in their public schools.

Willie and Alves, both school desegregation experts, were recently hired by Mayor Raymond Flynn to help bring about these positive changes in the city's schools and still have a desegregation plan that both school officials and the federal courts will accept.

However, there is a private concern among some city and school officials that Willie and Alves will be perceived not as bearers of a tried and proven school reform plan, but as the "hired guns" of Flynn who, some critics argue, wants his way with school reform. They fear that Willie and Alves are there to deliver for the mayor, not for the city's parents and children.

This perception comes largely from suspicion and distrust, fueled by earlier battles between Flynn and School Superintendent Laval Wilson, that Flynn hopes to gain more control over the city's educational system through his plans for school reform. But that is simply not true.

The two educators are here on a different mission – to improve a deteriorating school system and have a school assignment plan that will bring more residents into the schools, instead of fleeing from them. Virtually everyone knows about white flight from Boston's desegregation, but there are also dozens of black middle-class families who fled low-quality education in many of its schools.

In meetings with various parents groups in recent weeks, both educators have found a consensus as to what should be done with the city's system: parents should have more of a choice as to what school their children will attend; making sure that the schools never again come under control of the federal courts, and give more empowerment to principals and teachers.

These are the elements that would be included in a controlled choice plan, which needs the cooperation of everyone involved if it is to work. So far, at least publicly, there is cooperation among all parties, including Flynn, Wilson, the School Committee, department officials and parents.

As for Willie and Alves, they are working with these varied groups as mediators, not as hired guns. In developing the plan, they work, free of political entanglements, with involved groups along the way to make sure they all agree with each move as the process moves toward a fully developed plan. That is a key reason the school formula is so successful – all the distrust and suspicion is removed with this input.

With this cooperation and collaboration, controlled choice has won broad-based support in other cities from superintendents, teachers' unions, school boards, mayors and parent groups of different races and income levels.

A controlled choice desegregation plan actually is the driving force that improves quality school education. With parents having a choice of three schools they think are best for their children's education, there also will be schools that very few parents will choose – because they know that these schools are in poor physical shape or poorly administered.

As a result, this plan helps to identify good schools, with parents and principals working to keep them that way, and it identifies poor quality schools that can be targeted for improvement, thus expanding quality education in Boston.

What also makes the plan work is that 90 percent of the parents usually get their first, second or third choice of schools. Under its guidelines, the schools must reflect the racial ratio of the city's school system, thus guaranteeing racial fairness while giving parents an opportunity to send their children to schools close to home.

Controlled choice is working in Cambridge, Fall River and Lowell, as well as Seattle and Little Rock, Ark. It is more acceptable, and more flexible, than the federal desegregation order that ruled Boston for more than a decade.

Yet it is a plan that brightens the city's educational future, while preventing a return to its ugly past. And all Willie and Alves need is a chance to make it all happen.

Boston Ready to Overhaul School Busing Polic

By ALLAN R. GOLD
Special to The New York Times

BOSTON, Dec. 27 — This city is on the verge of overhauling its school busing policy for the first time since 1974, when a Federal district judge ordered the public schools to desegregate, a decision that convulsed Boston and made it a national symbol of racial intolerance.

The changes in busing and student assignments, to be voted on Wednesday by the Boston School Committee, would bring control of the Boston schools back to city officials after years of stringent court supervision. For parents, the changes, if adopted as expected, could mean a greater choice of schools for their children and shorter bus rides.

And for some Bostonians, the measures would end a divisive, frustrating chapter in the city's history and offer a fresh chance to improve the public schools.

'A Historic Opportunity'

"The student assignment plan is a historic opportunity for Boston to move forward in giving parents choice and restoring confidence in public education," said Mayor Raymond L. Flynn, who has been pushing hard for the adoption of the plan.

Few politicians, educators or parents are happy with Boston's public schools, which cost about $400 million a year to operate for 57,000 pupils.

A focal point of the dissatisfaction has been busing. In the years since busing was introduced there has been a dramatic shift in the makeup of the population of the public schools. In 1972 about 60 percent of the students were white, as against just 24 percent today.

As a result, the busing system now involves "shuffling black children across the city to a mediocre school to attend a school with other black children," said John A. Nucci, president of the Boston School Committee, who has supported busing to desegregate the schools.

Student test scores in reading and mathematics have improved marginally in recent years, but not fast enough to satisfy anyone. Nearly 40 percent of the system's ninth-graders, or about 1,870 students, will drop out before graduation, recent estimates show.

Push for Local School Power

One continuing sore point is the condition of the school buildings. "We have some of the worst-looking schools in the country," said Laval S. Wilson, the School Superintendent.

There is more on the table than school assignments. Mr. Wilson is facing a movement started by city officials, union leaders, business people and local education groups to give more power to individual schools at the expense of school administrators.

The idea, "school-based management," is that principals and teachers know what is best for the students in their schools and should be permitted to make more curriculum and budget decisions. These principals and teachers would be held accountable for their actions and the educational results, advocates say.

But some people are not as optimistic that the changes can upgrade the system, one that has seen seven superintendents and nearly as many educational approaches in the last 15 years.

"Parents in Boston have no confidence in the Boston School Committee," said James Kelly, a City Council member who was a leader of the anti-busing movement of the 1970's.

The student assignment plan centers on the emotional issue of where students attend school. Since 1975, children have been assigned a particular school in line with a desegregation plan imposed by Judge W. Arthur Garrity Jr. after finding that the school system knowingly pursued discriminatory policies.

When the judge's plan was introduced, it touched off violent clashes at several public schools and boycotts that tore apart the city. More than half of Boston's public school students are bused, some over long distances. Judge Garrity's ruling prompted thousands of white parents to remove their children from the public schools.

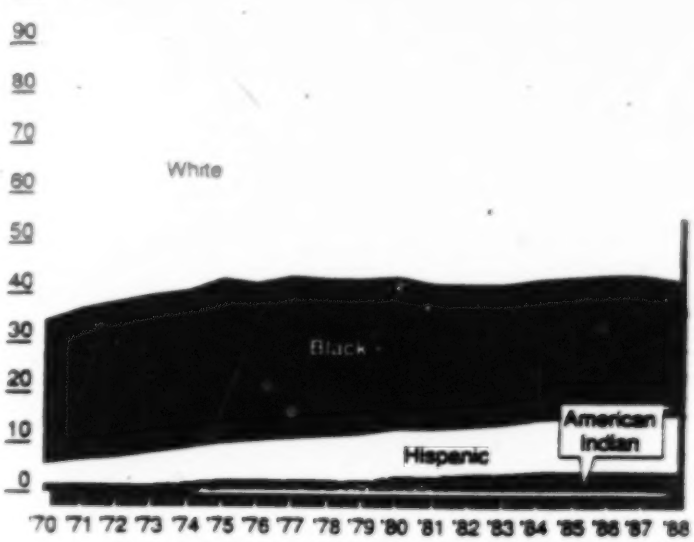
A Choice of Schools

The courts have gradually relaxed their grip on the school system, and in September 1987 a Federal appeals court ruled that Boston had done everything it could to desegregate the schools, given their changed racial composition.

Under the plan being considered by the School Committee, students and parents would have more of a choice about schools, and many could choose a school within walking distance of their homes.

White Flight From Boston Schools

Fall enrollment in public schools, in thousands. Busing began in 1974.



Sources: Department of Health, Education and Welfare (1970-74), Massachusetts State Department of Education

The New York Times/Dec. 28, 1988

A new approach is needed because of a major shift in the school population.

If the School Committee adopts the plan Wednesday, it intends to introduce it gradually beginning next September. The plan requires state approval, which is expected. It may also need Judge Garrity's assent, although there is disagreement on that.

Public debate about the future of the school system is far more low key than in it was in 1975, partly reflecting changing attitudes in the city.

How Boston has changed can also be seen in who is running the city. Mayor Flynn, who as a state legislator from South Boston vigorously opposed busing, has made racial tolerance a high priority since election to his first term in 1983. There are now blacks on the City Council and on the School Committee, a black woman is running the Boston Housing Authority and Mr. Wilson, who is black, is the School Superintendent.

Perhaps the biggest change has occurred in the school system itself. When black parents brought suit in in 1972 charging that the School Committee discriminated against their children, the system had 96,000 students, about 60 percent white.

Since then, the number of students has dropped to 57,000. In a city where 60 percent of the 600,000 residents are white, only 24 percent of public school students are white, as against 48 percent who are black, 19 percent Hispanic and 8 percent of Asian descent.

The dramatic decrease in the number of white students has made it difficult to achieve racial balance in the schools.

The proposed plan to provide more choice is an attempt to reduce the long-distance busing while retaining desegregation as a goal. It would encourage improvements in educational quality by giving parents a chance to select schools.

The consultants who prepared the plan are Charles V. Willie, a Harvard University professor, and Michael J. Alves, former director for desegregation assistance of the Massachusetts Department of Education.

The proposal splits the city into three zones — east, west and north — of about 14,000 students each. The plan, which would affect kindergarten through eighth grade, would permit students to choose any of about 20 schools in the zone where they live. The consultants argue that this competitive shopping process by parents will force unpopular schools to shape up or face shake-ups or closure.

To most parents, though, what really matters is what goes on inside the school building.

"Unless they improve the quality of education, they haven't done anything," said Hattie McKinnis, executive director of the Citywide Parents Council.

Paul Conklin

Mayor Raymond L. Flynn, who has pushed hard for the adoption of a plan to overhaul the school busing policy in Boston.